THE ARMS OF ACHILLES AND HOMERIC COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUE

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RICHARD STOLL SHANNON, III

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LUGDUNI BATAVORUM E. J. BRILL MCMLXXV

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BY

RICHARD STOLL SHANNON, III

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My particular thanks to Professor John Finley and Professor Gregory Nagy, and to my wife, Ann, for their help, encouragement, and patience during the preparation of this thesis.

Tatsächlich sei Beethoven in seiner Mittelzeit weit subjektivistischer, um nicht zu sagen: weit 'persönlicher' gewesen als zuletzt; weit mehr sei er damals bedacht gewesen, alles Konventionelle, Formel- und Floskelhafte, wovon die Musik ja voll sei, vom persönlichen Ausdruck verzehren zu lassen, es in die subjektive Dynamik einzuschmelzen. Das Verhältnis des späten Beethoven, etwa in den fünf letzten Klaviersonaten zum Konventionellen sei bei aller Einmaligkeit und selbst Ungeheuerlichkeit der Formensprache ein ganz anderes, viel lässlicheres und geneigteres. Unberührt, unverwandelt vom Subjektiven trete die Konvention im Spätwerk öfters hervor, in einer Kahlheit oder, man möge sagen, Ausgeblasenheit, Ich-Verlassenheit, welche nun wieder schaurig-majestätischer wirke als jedes persönliche Wagnis. In diesen Gebilden, sagte der Redner, gingen das Subjektive und die Konvention ein neues Verhältnis ein, bestimmt vom Tode.......

Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*

As a matter of fact, Beethoven had been far more "subjective," not to say far more "personal," in his middle period than in his last, had been far more bent on taking all the flourishes, formulas, and conventions, of which music is certainly full, and consuming them in the personal expression, melting them into the subjective dynamic. The relation of the later Beethoven to the conventional, say in the last five piano sonatas, is, despite all the uniqueness and even uncanniness of the formal language, quite different, much more complaisant and easy-going. Untouched, untransformed by the subjective, convention often appeared in the late works, in a baldness, one might say exhaustiveness, an abandonment of self, with an effect more majestic and awful than any reckless plunge into the personal. In these forms, said the speaker, the subjective and conventional assumed a new relationship, conditioned by death.

Translation by H. T. Lowe-Porter

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FOREWORD

This volume is an almost verbatim printing of the doctoral thesis which I completed at Harvard in 1973, and as such it shares in all the flaws of that form of scholarship. For what virtues it has, I want to extend my special thanks to Professors John Finley and Gregory Nagy, who were my advisors in its preparation, and to the Cambridge Thursday evening group, among whom many of my ideas developed. Others of my ideas originated in a seminar on the *Iliad* taught by Professor Cedric Whitman, and he and Professors A. B. Lord, G. F. Else, and William Whallon have subsequently been kind enough to read, listen to, and offer perceptive criticisms of the manuscript. None of this implies, of course, that any of the above named scholars necessarily agrees with, or approves of, my ideas or my methods, and I claim the flaws in both as entirely my own.

Finally, the publication of this volume was made possible by equal grants from the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies of the University of Michigan, and from the Loeb Publication Fund of the Department of the Classics of Harvard University. I offer my personal and professional gratitude to the people and institutions which enabled me to obtain the grants, and to T. A. Edridge, the Classical Editor of E. J. Brill Publishers, whose patience and expertise expedited the entire process of publication.

Ann Arbor, Michigan R.S.S., III

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The present state of Homeric scholarship is diverse and unsettled enough to make any statement about the theory of oral composition potentially controversial or even counterproductive. If there is any area of agreement, it appears to lie in a general dissatisfaction with the present applicability and productivity of past approaches, and in the conviction that it will be necessary to develop new methods—or to refine existing ones—in order to progress further in our attempts to understand and define Homeric compositional techniques. A central difficulty in this undertaking is the elusive uniqueness of the Homeric corpus; if one concentrates on the formulaic analogy to other oral literatures, he tends to neglect the poetic characteristics which separate Homer from them, whereas concentration on the narrative and thematic aspects of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* tends to obscure the distinction between the creative processes of their author and those of literate poets. Clearly, no existing theory of Homeric composition has defined a method capable of comprehending both sides of the art of the two epics; compositional elements which are employed, on the level of the line, in accordance with traditionally established metrical, syntactic, and semantic restrictions also function as the elements of the complex narrative and thematic structures which make the Homeric epics uniquely compelling and aesthetically unified even in comparison with the most sophisticated of literate works.

The problem of coordinating these diverse aspects of potential function and meaning in the same word or phrase has been recognized and defined in the past, and recent developments in Homeric scholarship suggest that my modest descriptive efforts here will be at best the smallest part of a much larger and more comprehensive theoretical system defining the characteristics and mechanics of Homeric composition.[1] Even the most metrically and statistically

[1] The following short survey of recent scholarship on the theory of Homeric composition is of necessity selective and somewhat arbitrary; for a concise description of the work up to 1967, see Michael N. Nagler, "Towards a generative view of the oral formula", *TAPA* 98 (1967), pp. 269-274. For more extensive surveys and bibliographies, see, e.g., E. R. Dodds, "HO-

oriented of the critics who have written since Parry have perceived the necessary relationship, through the medium of syntax, between their rather concise discipline and the much broader, aesthetic implications of the elements of stichic construction. O'Neill's [2] practical extension of the implications of oral theory to the functioning of the individual compositional element within the line exemplifies the most constructive sort of combination of statistical, metrical, and formulaic methods of analysis, and he clearly recognizes the potential for a broader application of his findings.

> The denotative and connotative relationships of words clearly constituted an important part of Greek poetic, which we may call its "rhetorical metric". The location of sense-pauses within the line is one of the outstanding phenomena of this rhetorical metric. I am convinced, however, that these phenomena are by nature secondary, superimposed on the basic pure metric. This is supported by the fact that we practically never see a poet violating metrical laws for rhetorical reasons. I am further convinced that the phenomena of the rhetorical metric cannot be properly evaluated until the problems of the more fundamental pure metric have been clarified and solved.[3]

Despite the unfortunate implication here that the meter is an imposition on the language rather than the product of its systematic application—an assumption which is belied by the consistency of O'Neill's own statistics from oral to literate poets and which I will discuss at length later—he has effectively anticipated the potential application of his method to broader areas of interpretation through the "rhetorical metric" of emphasized word-breaks created by the syntax. O'Neill devotes the final portion of his monograph to a summary of his precedessors' observations, from Varro to the

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MER", in M. Platnauer, ed., *Fifty Years of Classical Scholarship*, pp. 1-35; J. B. Hainsworth, *Homer*, Oxford, 1969; A. Lesky, "Homerische Forschungsbericht", in *Anzeiger für die Altertumwissenschaft* IV (1951), pp. 65-80, and 195-212; V (1952), pp. 1-24; VI (1953), pp. 129-150; VIII (1955), pp. 129-156; XII (1959), pp. 129-146; XIII (1960), pp. 1-22; XVII (1964), pp. 129-154; XVIII (1965), pp. 1-30; and XXI (1968), pp. 129-144; also H. J. Mette, "Homer 1930-1956", *Lustrum* I (1956), pp. 7-86, with "Nachträge" in *Lustrum* I (1956), pp. 319-320; II (1957), pp. 294-297, and 307-308; IV (1959), pp. 309-316; V (1960), pp. 649-656; XI (1966), pp. 33-69; and XV (1970), pp. 99-122. Finally, there is a very comprehensive and very recent bibliography by James P. Holoka, "Homeric Originality: A Survey", in *Classical World* LXVI 5, (February, 1973), pp. 257-293.

[2] E. G. O'Neill, Jr., "The localization of metrical word-types in the Greek hexameter", *YCS* VIII (1942), pp. 105-178.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

twentieth century, on the preferred locations of word-breaks and bridges within the hexameter, and to an analysis of the ways in which the localization of word-types is related to the observation—and violation—of these internal regularizations of the verse.[4] The only conclusion which can be drawn about ancient theory concerning caesura in the hexameter is that there is little agreement among the ancient critics, and both O'Neill in his summary and Bassett in his imposing collection of ancient criticism conclude that no substantial contribution to contemporary theory is to be found there, particularly since it appears to be the relatively late product of rhetorical rather than poetic theory.[5] Likewise, the useful efforts of purely descriptive metricians [6] can only be related to the actual functioning of the hexameter through a method like O'Neill's or through specialized studies like Wyatt's meticulous examination of the linguistic and poetic motivations of "metrical lengthening" in Homer.[7]

The other major advance in metrical analysis of the Greek hexameter during the first half of this century was of course Hermann Fränkel's formulation of his theory of the tetracolonic division of the line into characteristic metrical and rhetorical segments.[8] The theory, as restated in 1955, not only succeeds in restating metrical strictures in the more positive terms of internal

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[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 160-178.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 165-166; S. E. Bassett, "The theory of the Homeric caesura according to the extant remains of the ancient doctrine", *AJP* XL (1919), pp. 343-372. The collection is well worth attention despite the confusion which characterizes most of the material. See pp. 369-370 for Bassett's conclusions.

[6] *E.g.*, Bruno Snell, *Griechische Metrik*, 3rd ed., Göttingen, 1962; Paul Maas, *Greek Metre*, translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, corrected reprint, Oxford, 1966; Munno, Gregorio, *La lingua d'Omero*; *in appendice*: *Elementi di prosodia e metrica omeriche*, Rome, 1965, all of which have distinct virtues in their description of the hexameter. Finally, W. R. Hardie, *Res Metrica*, Oxford, 1920, is remarkable for having anticipated elements of Fränkel's tetracolonic theory (Hardie, pp. 14-15) and Nagy's theory of the origin of the hexameter (p. 25), both of which I will discuss later.

[7] W. F. Wyatt, Jr., *Metrical Lengthening in Homer* (Thesis, Harvard, 1962), published as number 35 of *Incunabula Graeca*, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, Rome, 1969.

[8] Hermann Fränkel, "Der homerische und der kallimachische Hexameter", in *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens*, Munich, 1955, pp. 100-156; this article is a reworked version of one in *Göttinger Nachrichten* (1926), pp. 197-229, and a shorter description of his theory is also contained in Fränkel's *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*, 2nd ed., Munich, 1962, pp. 32 ff.

line-structure and in delineating the mechanisms which coordinate word- and sense-breaks within the line; [9] it also recognizes the caution which must be exercised in using statistics in the analysis of metrical material, all of which is subject to individual interpretation in the preparatory stages of collecting raw figures.[10] This caution and objectivity contribute to Fränkel's recognition of the limits of his work and of its potential relevance to the study of formula-structure.

> Sicherlich hat auch die Formelhaftigkeit der epischen Sprache, die sowohl aus ästhetischen wie aus praktischen Gründen gepflegt wurde, der Ausbildung eines geregelten Kolensystems kräftigen Vorschub geleistet, denn nur in ihm konnten die Formeln recht gedeihen; aber es wäre nicht richtig, wenn wir in den Formeln die eigentliche Ursache des Zäsurensystems sehen wollten. Denn dann hätte z.B. Kallimachos mit den Formeln zusammen auch das Zäsurensystem abgebaut, statt es noch weiter auszubauen; und der tragische Trimeter operiert mit einem Zäsurensystem von prinzipiell gleicher Art, aber ohne Formeln.[11]

To give this my own interpretation, both the internal colon-structure and formulae are the products of the language, and consequently neither is imposed on the other; instead, as in the case of the localization of word-types, both continue to function in concert as parts of the fundamental nature of the specialized language of the hexameter, regardless of the compositional or stylistic idiosyncracies of the poet using it. The suggestions of a somewhat mechanical rigidity which can be found in Fränkel's formulation of the tetracolonic system are completely removed by Porter's admirable reinterpretation of it in poetic and aesthetic terms.[12] His most important contribution is, in my opinion, his articulation of the "normative" nature of the metrical and colonic structure and his extension of both systems to include meaning as an essential element of poetic form which cannot be separated from it.

> The position taken here, essentially that of Jakobson, is that metrics is the study of the realization of form in language, not in meaningless noise, and, as in language sound and sense inextricably

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[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 113-116 especially.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 127, note 1.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 118.
[12] H. N. Porter, "The early Greek hexameter", *Yale Classical Studies* XII (1951), pp. 3-63.

implicate one another, this includes the study of the influence of form on meaning as well as sound-relationships.[13]

This combination of critical attitudes not only avoids the rather simplistic practice of labelling unusual variations of meter, localization, or colometry as "objectionable" or "wrong"; it also facilitates the analysis of such anomalies in comprehensive literary terms instead of dismissing them simply as "metrically objectionable".[14] In a system which is normative rather than restrictive, variations not only have the potential to relieve the rhythmic regularity of the flow of lines, but they can also emphasize the meaning or importance of words or phrases which appear in unusual metrical contexts.

More strictly metrical reappraisals of Fränkel's hexameter colometry have also been made;[15] Dale's survey of Fränkel and his successors objects to the flexibility of his colon-system and to his attempt to avoid "taboos" in its formulation, but her implicit desire for a more rigidly structured system seems unrealistic in light of the even looser colometry with which she customarily works in lyric. She nonetheless recognizes that "as a mode of hearing the hexameter and of apprehending its grace and the unending subtlety of its metrical in relation to its rhetorical content, F's contribution is of the highest value."[16] In addition to reviews and minor criticisms of the work of O'Neill and Porter, she also summarizes Mette's attempt to deduce caesurae, or colon-boundaries, from the incidence of hiatus in what he regards as the oldest part of the *Iliad*.[17] Since, after proper compensation for lost linguistic archaisms, hiatus always occurs at one of the caesurae recognized by ancient metricians, Mette concludes that they are the correct bases for a hexameter colometry which includes types with either *Zweiteilung*, *Dreiteilung*, or *Vierteilung* and a complicated internal relationship of length between the different segments of each type.[18] Dale quite

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[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8; he is referring to R. Jakobson, "Über den Versbau der Serbokroatischen Volksepen", *Archives néerlandaises de la phonétique expérimentale*, VIII-IX (1933).

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[15] A. M. Dale, "Greek metric, 1936-1957", *Lustrum* 2 (1957), pp. 29-35, and H. J. Mette, "Die Struktur des ältesten daktylischen Hexameters", *Glotta* 35 (1956), pp. 1-17.

[16] Dale, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

[17] See Mette's *Der Pfeilschuß des Pandaros*, Halle, 1951 for his contention that *Iliad* III. 2 to VII. 322 and VII. 343-432 are the oldest sections.

[18] Mette, *op. cit.*, *passim*, and Dale, *op. cit.*, p. 33, without whose concise review of Mette's rather complex method my own summary would have been longer and clumsier.

properly wonders whether a section of the *Iliad* which Mette considers recent would yield different results, since he implies that "later" hexameters would probably deviate from his ideal sample.

Finally, the most recent major reevaluation of the tetracolonic theory was made by G. S. Kirk; [19] after complete summaries of the work of Fränkel, Porter, and Dale, which note their respective virtues, Kirk raises the objection that although the incidence of word-end does tend to be concentrated at Fränkel's A, B, and C caesurae, the correspondence of sense-breaks is not sufficiently high to justify calling the resultant segments "cola".

> But the four-colon theory implies a high degree of correspondence between sense and rhythm; for, even on Porter's view that the cola are in origin and essence rhythmical cola, their predominant normative effect is an inevitable consequence. Moreover at the one point which is not in a sense "obvious", namely the A caesura, at least half of the verses in our short sample passage fail to show a correspondence between assumed rhythmical break and possible sense-break. . . . . Thus it seems. . . . . that, if the unsatisfactory C^2 caesura is discounted, then the number of verses which must be regarded as four-colon. . . . . verses is not significantly high, especially when the evidence of natural or possible sense-divisions is brought to bear.[20]

His objection to Fränkel's insistence on the coincidence of "Sinneseinschnitte" and caesura seems sound, particularly if his statistics are representative, but his case against Porter's concept of rhythmically normative cola seems considerably weaker, especially since his own alternative explanation of word-end localization in the hexameter is based on a "combination of factors" which includes as a major element the desire for the regularization of some rhythms (*e.g.*, the bucolic diaeresis) and the avoidance of other cadences and intrusions (*e.g.*, successive trochaic cuts and Hermann's bridge).[21] Kirk's other factors, such as the length of available words or "the assumption of a euphonic explanation of some kind",[22] are not

[19] G. S. Kirk, "Studies in some technical aspects of Homeric style, I. The structure of the Homeric hexameter; II. Verse-structure and sentence-structure in Homer", *YCS* 20 (1966), pp. 75-152.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91; 95-102; for a spirited, but in my opinion somewhat exaggerated, defense of Fränkel's original formulation of the tetracolonic theory against subsequent critics and revisers, see W. B. Ingalls, "The structure of the Homeric hexameter: A review", *Phoenix* XXIV (1970), pp. 1-12.

[22] Kirk, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92.

incompatible with the tetracolonic theory; they are different, more metrically oriented explanations of the same phenomena. Kirk himself recognizes this weakness but insists that "these cola are incidental, are not basic underlying elements of the hexameter, and need not be defended as such when they are absent. It is doubtful, indeed, whether 'cola' is a particularly useful way of describing them." [23]

These rather fine semantic distinctions concerning the definition of "colon" are somewhat subjective, depending on the individual's attitude toward what precisely constitutes a "unit of meaning", and they tend to obscure a much more important methodological distinction which could help to clarify the issues and dichotomies involved. The difference in method can be seen even more clearly in a recent article on the structure of the hexameter by R. S. P. Beekes; [24] his system is composed of a set of six rules which he believes explain O'Neill's statistics for word-localization.

> The Greek hexameter has a caesura, realized by a syntactical boundary, at 5 or 5½. Often the final cadence is marked off by a syntactical boundary at 8; as word end at 7½ would give a 'false start' to such a final cadence, it is forbidden. To avoid verse end effect at the beginning, word end at 3½ and long final syllable at 4 are avoided. Perhaps to avoid the suggestion of verse end long final syllable is avoided at 8 and 10. A monosyllable at the end of the verse is also avoided. . . .
> . . . . . Together with its simplicity and the fact that the rules in themselves are to a great extent explainable, this gives us the impression that we have here the basic structure of the Greek hexameter. This is not to say there are not some other, more specific rules that cannot be found on the basis of O'Neill's observations.[25]

Aside from the triple negative in the final sentence, which produces a meaning opposite to what he apparently intended, Beekes fails to recognize the distinction between his own method and that of O'Neill, and Kirk makes the same basic mistake, though to a much smaller extent, in his critique of Fränkel and Porter. Kirk and Beekes are using a method which is basically metrical in orientation and primarily descriptive in approach, while the theories of Fränkel, O'Neill, and Porter which they are criticizing tend to be more

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[24] R. S. P. Beekes, "On the structure of the Greek hexameter (O'Neill' interpreted)", *Glotta* L (1972), pp. 1-10.
[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

linguistic in orientation and generative, or explanatory, in their formulation. The descriptive, metrical approach generally regards the various caesurae and bridges as separate manifestations of different influences, frequently unrelated to each other and consequently to be defined and rationalized individually, whereas the generative, linguistic point of view perceives the hexameter as an integrated system, no single part of which can be adequately described or explained without constant reference to the other parts and to the whole structure which they compose.

The neglect of this methodological distinction—or the failure to articulate it if it was recognized—is the result of a much larger, false distinction which is seldom stated explicitly but which is almost universally assumed in discussion of the structure and function of the hexameter. Kirk's introductory statement of purpose, although it explicitly recognizes the necessary relationship between verse-structure and meaning, nonetheless restates implicitly the assumed dichotomy between meter and formula.

> Meanwhile other and neglected aspects of the style of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* deserve attention, notably their rhythmical structure, and the relation of the verse and its component parts to the sentence and lesser units of meaning. A fuller understanding of these topics may well be a prerequisite for any serious advance in our knowledge of formular techniques; and it seems *a priori* probable that in many respects, though not all, rhythm and verse-structure conditioned formular practice rather than *vice versa*.[26]

Although the first part of Kirk's article is confused by this dichotomy and by the difficulty and subjectivity of distinguishing, for statistical purposes, between simple word-breaks and boundaries of syntax or meaning, the second section, in which he makes important refinements in the previous work of Parry and Lord on enjambement, makes it clear that he recognizes the possibility of coincidence of formula- and colon-boundary but is only willing to accept it as a colon-break when it is further reinforced by a definite sense-break as indicated by the internal punctuation which results from enjambement.

> We notice once more the important function of the four positions in the verse where internal pause occurs; they are in fact the caesuras which mark off the "cola" identified by Fränkel. . . . , but here they are used as the limits of sentences—secondary limits, ad-

[26] Kirk, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

> mittedly, but not purely random ones once the verse-end is abandoned as primary limit. Often it can be seen that short sentences which cross the verse-end in integral enjambment are composed of brief phrase-units dropped successively, as it were, into these "colon" slots. That process is itself cumulative in a valid sense. . . . . Now these phrases are often standardized units or adaptations of them—formulas, in fact. Here metrical, structural, and formular analyses coincide. . . .[27]

At least a part of the reason for the confusion which Bassett believed was in the ancient metricians' doctrines of caesura is to be found in his own perspective in examining them, for he, too, insists on a strict distinction between word-break, sense-break, and punctuation—in other words, the dichotomy between meter and formula, between form and content.

> Joannes Siceliotes (493, Walz) . . . . . confused caesura with the pause in the sense, calling τομή now a word-end, later a pause in the thought, and still again a pause sufficient for punctuation, but he is clear in his conclusion:
>
> καὶ διὰ οὖν τὰς διαφόρους τομὰς ἄριστος ποιητῶν Ὅμηρος [28]

The ancient critic Siceliotes has clearly recognized, perhaps better than many of his modern successors, the central aesthetic importance of the complexity and flexibility of the Homeric internal articulation of the hexameter; moreover, what Bassett interprets as confusion about the nature of the caesura appears instead to be a comprehensive, if not explicit, realization of the potential functions of a caesura, which can be word-end alone, or word-end with sense-break, or both of those combined with punctuation. Obviously, neither of the latter two can occur without the presence of the one or two which precede it in the series.

The distinction between meter and meaning and the belief that a regular internal word-break must be reinforced by a sense-break in order to have a structural reality seem to me to be based on the

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[27] *Ibid.*, p. 136; Kirk has anglicized the spelling of "enjambement" to "enjambment" throughout the article. For an attempt to apply this sort of analysis to a single compositional element, see A. G. Tsopanakis, "Problems in the Homeric hexameter", Ἀριστοτέλειον πανεπιστήμιον Θεσσαλονίκης, Ἐπιστημονικὴ ἐπετηρὶς φιλοσοφικῆς σχολῆς IX (1966), 337-374 (usually listed under *Salonika, Aristoteleion* etc.). The attempt proves inconclusive because the very syntactic and semantic flexibility which characterize a connective like ὅθι, the one Tsopanakis has chosen, also make it nearly impossible to analyze comprehensively.

[28] Bassett, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

unstated assumption that the metrical structure of the verse is separate from its rhetorical, syntactic, and formulaic structure. These latter elements of the poet's tradition had consequently to be manipulated in order to conform with the artificial imposition on his language represented by the meter, which, it is assumed, was either alien in origin or conflated from shorter preexisting metrical elements.[29] The more dangerous of the two theories is the one with the more impressive support—Meillet's contention, on the basis of comparison with Indic verse-forms, that the hexameter was not Greek, and therefore not Indo-European, in origin, but was borrowed from another language. Meillet's conjecture for its origin is Minoan. If one accepts this position, then clearly he must also assume that the Greek language was accommodated to the alien verse-form through a series of antagonistic compromises, and the dichotomy between "meter" and "formula" or "rhetoric" or "meaning" is not only acceptable but necessary. The meter would consequently be an artificial external structure imposed on the poet's native language, and the analysis of the forced adaptation of the characteristics of an essentially iambo-trochaic language to the adopted dactylic structure would be central to our understanding of the compositional techniques of Greek epic and the development of its underlying formulaic tradition. The same is true, to a lesser extent, of the theory that the hexameter is a conflation of a dactylic tetrameter and a dactylic dimeter, a theory which has by now hopefully been discarded.

Even though neither of these theories is usually stated as the basis for the theoretic and methodological separation of meter and the various aspects of meaning—most particularly formula—that dichotomy continues to be assumed, especially in the work of descriptive metricians and in the insistence of oral theorists that "metrical necessity" was an antagonistic external element artificially imposed on the formulaic language of the poet's tradition. That the dichotomy is false should finally be proved by a number of recent works which have demonstrated the intimate interrelation-

[29] For the hexameter as an alien verse-form, see A. Meillet, *L'origine indo-européenne des Mètres grecs*, Paris, 1923; cf. G. F. Else, "Homer and the Homeric problem", *Univ. of Cincinnati Classical Studies* (Semple Lectures) I (1967), pp. 324-325. Porter (*op. cit.*, pp. 18-19) gives a complete bibliography of what he calls "the astonishing vogue of the theory that the hexameter originally consisted of a dactylic tetrameter followed by a dactylic dimeter, or adonic."

ship of the linguistic and metrical structures of the hexameter and their background of concomitant development from common sources in the Greek language. The first of these is W.S. Allen's demonstration of a very close correspondence between the rhythmical patterns of Greek verse, specifically the hexameter and the iambic trimeter, with their systems of internal articulation, and a proposed system of stress accent in Greek.[30] His method is of necessity circular, since the evidence for stress accent in the language has to be drawn indirectly from the patterns of verse ictus, but it is straightforward and produces undeniably conclusive results.

> The method adopted is simple and almost inevitable. One first marks the syllables which are presumed to bear the metrical ictus; and one then classifies the positions in which these marks occur relatively to words of different quantitative patterns. If this classification shows a high statistical correlation with particular positions in particular patterns of word, this may reasonably lead to a provisional hypothesis that such positions in the word were normally stressed in speech.[31]

This method not only demonstrates a consistent pattern of stress accents in Greek words—a primary stress on the last heavy syllable of a word, and a secondary stress on preceding heavy syllables separated from the primary stress by at least one *mora* of quantity [32] —but it also provides an explanation for the consistent avoidance of words ending with a spondee coinciding with the end of a foot, which would lead to a conflict of verse ictus and word accent, and for differences of internal structure between the Greek and Latin hexameters.

> We have mentioned the clear preference in the Greek hexameter for a diaeresis at the end of the 4th foot to be preceded by a dactyl rather than a spondee. As long ago as 1747, L. Valckenaer observed that out of 927 verses from Theocritus, *Idylls* i-vii, x, xi, 711 showed a dactylic diaeresis, whereas only forty showed a spondaic diaeresis at this point. He contrasted this with Vergil's *Eclogues*, where out of 830 lines the figures were 232 for a dactylic diaeresis and 286 for a spondaic diaeresis. . . . . The reason for the difference seems clear; the restriction regarding the bucolic diaeresis is not relevant

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30 W. S. Allen, "Prosody and prosodies in Greek", *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1966, pp. 107-148 (an expanded version of a Presidential Address delivered to the Society on May 6, 1966); also in Allen's *Vox Graeca*, London, 1968, pp. 157 ff.

31 *Ibid.* (in *TPS*), pp. 121-122.

32 *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123.

> to Latin, since it makes no difference to the accent/ictus relationship whether a word ends with a spondee or a dactyl—the stress-accent will in either case come on the first syllable of the sequence, and so will coincide with the ictus.[33]

In the first place, this answers the difficult question, previously raised by Porter, of why dactylic word-end should be acceptable in these positions when spondaic word-end is not; Porter's conclusion, that "long final syllables are somehow more effectively long than other long syllables",[34] anticipates Allen's theory of accent rather accurately. But the implications of the theory for our understanding of the structure and development of the hexameter are far more important, as Allen recognized in his outline of his purposes by quoting Meillet: "metre consists of a stylization or normalization of the natural rhythm of language." [35] In other words, the structure of the verse in all its aspects—rhythmical, syntactic, rhetorical, and formulaic—is a product of the natural evolution of the language, since meter develops in response to the repeated, characteristic cadences of the language which generates it. Meillet's work on the Indo-European origins of Greek meters is based on that fundamental hypothesis, using comparative analogy to Old Indic meters, which Meillet demonstrates to be cognate with the commonest Greek lyric meters. His reason for excluding the dactylic hexameter from his analysis was his assumption that, since there was no obvious Sanskrit cognate, the hexameter, which is the earliest attested meter in Greek, must have been alien in origin; the subtlety and complexity of its structure imply an extremely long period of development, and since its appearance in Greek is earlier than any lyric attestation, Meillet concluded that the hexameter must have evolved outside the Greek, and indeed outside the Indo-European, poetic tradition.

The difficulty Meillet encountered in finding a Sanskrit cognate of the hexameter has now been resolved by Nagy in a forthcoming work which demonstrates what was implied by Allen's evidence of a correlation between stress accent and verse ictus—that the hexameter is native Greek in origin.[36] Nagy has shown convincingly

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

[34] Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[35] Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 118, quotes and translates Meillet, *op, cit.*. p. 19.

[36] G. Nagy, *Comparative Studies in Greek and Indic Meter*, Harvard Monographs in Comparative Literature, 1974; I have quoted from the prepublication manuscript, and there have been some subsequent changes in phras-

that the hexameter developed within Greek from the pherecratic with an internal expansion of three dactyls, a meter still employed by Alkaios (368/99 Diehl/175 Lobel and Page) which has a direct Sanskrit cognate.

> ⏓ ⏓ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – –
> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
>
> This proposal entails that the original hexameter must have operated on the inherited principle of isosyllabism (as still maintained by Alkaios). Since a pher^{3d} consists of 16 syllables, this conjectured prototype of Greek epic verse matches the syllable-count of the *śloka*, the basic unit of Indic epic versification. (By origin, the *śloka* is composed of two 8-syllable Anuṣṭubh verses).
>
> In order to derive the dactylic hexameter from pher^{3d}, I postulate the following developments in pher^{3d}:
>
> 1) the optional replacement of –⏑⏑ by ––
> 2) the replacement of ⏓⏓ by ––, which is optionally replaced by –⏑⏑.[37]

These changes are the direct results of factors operative in the language itself; the first can be related to the contraction of two short vowels into a single long vowel after the loss of intervocalic **s* and **y* in Greek, and the second, the generalization of the form–– (=–⏑⏑) for the Aeolic base, results from a number of factors—the Greek stress accent, as postulated by Allen, which contributed to a pre-existing preference for an initial long in the Aeolic base, and a subsequent analogical extension of the rhythmic pattern of the other feet in the verse to what was regarded as its first foot.[38] The formal metrical parallel between the Greek and Indic epic verses is confirmed by a parallel in diction in the use of the formulaically cognate phrases κλέος ἄφθιτον and śráva(s) ákṣitam in demonstrably comparable metrical contexts in Homer (Iliad IX. 413), Sappho (44.4), and the Rig Veda (1.40. 4b; 8. 103. 5b; 9. 66. 7c; 1. 9. 7b-c).[39] The probability that the hexameter developed from a lyric predecessor has also been corroborated recently by evidence from within the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; although similarities in diction are ambiguous, since the influence or development might have run

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eology. The entire study deserves—and rewards—the careful attention of all serious Greek metricians. See Nagy also for a very complete bibliography of the entire subject.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 49-56.

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 104-117.

either way, the ways in which both epic and lyric poets refer to their own vocation and to the work of other poets indicate an early equation of the two genres, followed only later by a differentiation between the material and methods of the two types of poets.[40] Nagy has also demonstrated the way in which lyric segments, particularly pherecratics, glyconics, and shorter forms related to them, not only fit into the caesura system of the hexameter but are also adaptable within the structure of the verse, expanding and clarifying the earlier work of Hainsworth and Hoekstra on formulaic flexibility,[41] by redefining the origin and operation of the caesura within the context of its language.

> .... traditional phraseology merely offers opportunities for developments in traditional meter, and..... these opportunities are diachronically optional. A diachronic trend may become a synchronic constant, but this is not inevitable. The caesura is a synchronic metrical constant generated by a diachronic phraseological trend.[42]

The implications of this hypothesis of the origin and development of the hexameter are clear for our study of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; meter is neither arbitrary nor artificial as a normative structure in epic verse but is instead simply one aspect of the specialized *Kunstsprache*, and like the formalized diction of the poetic language, the meter and the internal articulation of the verse evolved in response to the characteristic cadences and rhythms of the natural

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[40] On this complex topic, see especially A. Paliaro, "Origini liriche e formazione agonale dell' epica greca", *Atti del Convegno internazionale sul Tema: La Poesia epica e la sua Formazione*, number 139 of Problemi attuali di Scienza e di Cultura, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome, 1970, pp. 31-58, and Pagliaro's earlier article "La terminologia poetica di Omero e l'origine dell' epica", *Ricerche Linguistiche* (University of Rome) 2 (1951), pp. 1-46, and H. Koller, "Ἔπος", *Glotta* L (1972), pp. 16-24. For further information, see H. Maehler, *Die Auffassung des Dichterberufs im frühen Griechentum bis zur Zeit Pindars*, Göttingen, 1963; A. Luppino, "Una formula omerica in Saffo", *La Parola del Passato* XXII (1967), pp. 286-291; A. E. Harvey, "Homeric epithets in Greek lyric poetry", *CQ* 51 (1957), pp. 206-223; O. von Weber, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Homer und den älteren griechischen Lyrikern*, Dresden, 1955; Eva-Maria Geiss, *Grammatik zu Sappho und Alkaios (mit standigem Bezug auf Homer)*, Berlin, 1957. Much of this material may now be in need of reinterpretation in light of the new hypothesis on the relationship between these two branches of Greek poetry.

[41] J. B. Hainsworth, *The Flexibility of the Homeric Formula*, Oxford, 1968, and "A note on elision in Homer", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London* 14 (1967), pp. 17-21; and A. Hoekstra, *Homeric Modifications of Formulaic Prototypes*, Amsterdam, 1965.

[42] Nagy, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-147; I quote here from the prepublication manuscript.

language. In other words, the specialized language of the Greek oral tradition developed with a concomitant system of preferred cadences—none of which, it should be noted, is absolute in Homer—as one of its basic characteristics, a part of, rather than an imposition upon, the *Kunstsprache*, and any conflict between meter and diction is the result of subsequent divergent evolution within the context of the tradition.

> Whereas traditional meter and traditional phraseology are formally correlate in origin, their evolution may diverge. At the start, traditional phraseology sets and then regulates quantitative pattern (= meter) by force of precedent, but the resulting fixed meter in turn assumes dynamics of its own and becomes regulator of any incoming non-traditional phraseology. By becoming a structure in its own right, meter may also evolve independently of traditional phraseology; thus it could even happen that newly evolved laws of meter may obliterate aspects of the selfsame traditional phraseology that engendered them, if these aspects no longer match the meter.[43]

In an oral poetic tradition, meter and formulaic diction develop as two aspects of a larger whole which is the formalized equivalent of a natural language. The *Kunstsprache* is indeed a language, and as a language it has all the attributes of a "natural" language, with the additional qualification that both the poetic language and all its attributes are developed for the specialized aesthetic purpose of communicating poetic thought. Within the *Kuntsprache*, as within any language, words and phrases have a wide variety of potential functions, both denotative and connotative, which are partially conditioned by their customarily established meanings but are additionally evoked by the contexts in which they appear.

The evidence of close metrical studies not only indicates a synergistic relationship between formulaic and metrical structure on the formal level of the line; it also suggests much broader semantic and thematic potentials for the formula on the basis of linguistic analogy. A number of recent works have begun to explore these potentials and to attempt a redefinition of the formula in terms of its relationship to the narrative, the characterization, and the poetic themes of its context, of an aesthetically unified work; on the basic level of the epithet, Whallon has shown how even the commonest of fixed epithets can under special circumstances

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[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145; likewise from the manuscript.

respond reciprocally to its context by affecting the poet's concept of characterization.[44] As Whallon recognizes, he has chosen the most difficult and elusive element of formulaic diction for his study, and the results are consequently uneven but are nonetheless convincing in demonstrating that an individual compositional element, even a frequently repeated and often neutral one, can take on special meaning in response to certain contexts or can even influence the ways in which the adjacent narrative is conceived and composed, since epithets color the characterization of the figures involved in it.

The unavoidable imprecision of this sort of subjective analysis can be at least partially corrected by adapting the method for specific concentration on more restricted elements of the formulaic diction. Nagler's application of contextual analysis to more specialized systems of expressions, particularly those related to κρήδεμνον and the expansions and variations of πίονι δήμῳ, has yielded a new theory of the way in which formulae are generated by an individual poet working in an established oral tradition.[45] Nagler's hypothesis for the mechanism of oral composition posits an underlying "pre-verbal Gestalt" behind flexible formulaic systems which is capable of generating a variety of "allomorphs" appropriate to the poet's immediate context and purpose.

> The terms "traditional" and "original" do have legitimate applications in a theory of oral poetry, but not as conflicting polar opposites. Rather, they describe two stages of the same creative process, Gestalt and realization. Since the former is always traditional, furthermore, and the latter by definition always original, these terms merely designate the natural condition of those two stages in true oral composition. . . . . A modern linguist would no doubt put it this way: "All is traditional on the generative level, all original on the level of performance".[46]

The linguistic analogy here suggests the breadth and flexibility of structure and meaning which Nagler envisions for poetic composition within this system, and Hainsworth, although he agrees with

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[44] W. Whallon, *Formula, Character, and Context*, Center for Hellenic Studies, Washington, D. C. (distributed by Harvard Univeristy Press, Cambridge), 1969. Parts One and Two (pp. 1-70) deal specifically with the Homeric epics.

[45] M. N. Nagler, "Towards a generative view of the oral formula", *TAPA* 98 (1967), pp. 269-311; a book on the same topic entitled *Tradition and Spontaneity* is projected for publication in the fall of 1973 by the University of California Press, Berkeley.

[46] Nagler, *TAPA* 98, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

the basic conception, objects that Nagler's compositional hypothesis is not adequate to include the repeated generation of the same formula in the same way.[47] Ingalls has noted this objection in a recent article and quotes Hainsworth's own belief that fixed formulae are the result of "ossification" within a more flexible system,[48] but he objects to both definitions of the origin of formulae because "its earlier stages are so elusive and the meaning of the pre-verbal *Gestalt* so obscure that the concept is hardly helpful to the student of the Homeric formula; for it is not until a formula has attained some degree of fixity that it can be identified and studied."[49] The approach here is purely pragmatic and descriptive; it is not so much a criticism of Nagler's hypothesis as it is a definition of Ingalls' own specific area of interest, which is the description of particular formulae in terms of their relationships to the caesurae of Fränkel's tetracolonic system. Since the tetracolonic structure is predicated on the most common positions for word-break in the hexameter, Ingalls has no difficulty demonstrating an almost total correspondence between Fränkel's system and the formulae of Nagler's πίονι δήμῳ series and of Parry's samples from *Iliad* I. 1-25 and *Odyssey* I. 1-25,[50] but the very flexibility which makes the tetracolonic system a viable normative structure for the verse also means that formulae of extensive metrical variety can fit in each of the cola. The observation of the correspondence between formula- and colon-boundaries consequently contributes little to the definition of the structure and function of the formula but instead tends to reemphasize the unproductive dichotomy between formula and meter.

Nagler's approach consequently seems to me to be both more practically applicable and more comprehensive than is Ingalls'; the single problem with this sort of psychological definition of poetic creativity is the difficulty of distinguishing between oral and literate methods of composition. But this generative view is the only one which is able to encompass the complexity and variety of Homeric diction at the same time that it accounts for the formalized fixity of the most common elements of the poet's voca-

[47] Hainsworth, *Homer*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[48] W. Ingalls, "Another dimension of the Homeric formula", *Phoenix* XXVI (1972), p. 115, and Hainsworth, *The Flexibility of the Homeric Formula*, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
[49] Ingalls, "Another dimension of the Homeric formula", *op. cit.*, p. 115.
[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 115-117.

bulary. Both of these features of the oral creative process are reinforced by the analogy between the poet's tradition and other language-systems.

> The indications would seem to be that, precisely because the traditional Gestalt is not itself differentiated into any one fixed set of parameters and these parameters themselves have no one fixed form apiece, a given passage, even a single detail, may be the outlet for more than one idea. The oral poet can achieve the same amount of ambiguity, i.e. the same rich density of meanings, as the writing poet; indeed, provisions for this would seem to be deeply embedded in the methods and materials of his tradition.[51]

Indeed, the tradition originated and evolved as a specialized means of expressing and communicating particular ideas, and the extent of its potential for various types of expression can only be defined by direct reference to its products, the Homeric epics. It seems impossible that so highly developed and chronologically extended a tradition should be restricted to the articulation of direct narrative and explicit symbolism, and the numerous similarities on a formal level between the tradition of the Greek oral epic and other systems of language suggest a latent capacity for indirect, connotative expression through repeated themes, images, allusions and the like which is the equal of the most sophisticated written literatures; the question, of course, is the extent to which that capacity is realized in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

To conclude, the present state of structural and metrical evidence indicates that the recent hypotheses of Nagy and Nagler on the origin and function of the hexameter are fundamentally sound, and in combination they point the way toward the potentially most productive direction of research on the Homeric epics. The proportions of my own undertaking are modest; on the assumption that my interpretation of the origin, evolution, and compositional functioning of the epic tradition is substantially correct, I propose to examine a single system of narratively related scenes and objects in the *Iliad*—the arms of Achilles—and to attempt to demonstrate descriptively some of the ways in which individual episodes, and even single compositional elements, can be related to each other and integrated into the broader unifying patterns of conceptual themes associated with the major episodes and characters of the epic as a whole. I will attempt first to show how a large theme

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[51] Nagler, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

based on repeated scenes can be specialized to fit a particular character and his associated thematic context, and then to illustrate how a single compositional element—in this case, a single significant word—can be adapted to a specific thematic and conceptual function so completely that its use outside that context is avoided and even the use of semantically related elements is restricted and tends to affect their narrative contexts.

CHAPTER TWO

PATTERNED EPISODES AND ACHILLES' ARMOR

The definitive work on repeated episodes in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is of course Arend's meticulous study of typical scenes in Homer;[1] although he was understandably unaware of Parry's recent—at that time extremely recent—work on the way in which the Homeric epics were composed, his careful graphic and critical methods for describing and classifying typical scenes make his work equally useful for analyzing the epics as the products of an oral poet. Indeed, his demonstration of the internal flexibility of episode-patterns—their potential for expansion and elaboration within a basic normative framework—furnishes an interesting analogue to the recently demonstrated flexibility of some formulae. Yet Parry, despite his open admiration for Arend's methods, objects in his review of the study to the conclusions which Arend reaches on the basis of his research.[2] Specifically, he rejects as "philosophic and almost mystic" Arend's conclusion that the tension and contrast between the typical and the individual preserve an aesthetic representation of the Greek conception of reality, and Parry finally observes, "Now all that may or may not be true—*it does not matter much*, but it is surely simpler to say that Homer relates the same action in more or less the same way because that was the only way he had learned." (Italics mine)[3] This seems to me to be a rather narrowly positivistic point of view, to reject as incidental the aesthetic interpretation of a poetic phenomenon in favor of a purely pragmatic explanation based on the poet's method of composition. Both approaches to the material are clearly correct; Homer composed poetry in the form and style of the oral tradition in which he was trained, but that does not exclude the further explanation that the tradition evolved as it did for aesthetic reasons as well as for the practical considerations of ease of oral composition which Parry prefers to emphasize. The poet and his audience were attuned to

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[1] W. Arend, *Die typischen Szenen bei Homer*, Berlin, 1933.

[2] M. Parry, "On typical scenes in Homer", review in *Classical Philology* 31 (1936), pp. 357-360; reprinted in *The Making of Homeric Verse*, edited by Adam Parry, Oxford, 1971, pp. 404-407.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 358 (*MHV*, p. 405).

the aesthetic potential of the material of the tradition, and thus the distinction between "good" and "bad" oral poets which Parry interprets as a quantitative measure of their ability to expand and elaborate on any given theme. Were that the case, every typical scene should be fully elaborated in the work of a "good" oral poet; instead, in the case of Homer, we find elaboration and variation used with scrupulous selectivity in sets of typical scenes which range from unelaborated narratives of action to descriptions so fully elaborated that they digress completely from the action—all composed on the same basic pattern but selectively adapted by the poet to their contexts. This is precisely the distinction between typical (unelaborated) and individual (elaborated) which Arend noted and which is an aesthetic as well as a compositional characteristic of the Homeric epic.

The arming scenes in the *Iliad* furnish an excellent example of the specialized adaptation of patterned episodes to particular narrative and thematic contexts; an extreme example of such specialization might be the arming of Odysseus and Diomedes for their night mission in the *Doloneia* (X. 254-271), with its well known elaboration in the description of the boar's tooth helmet, which, as is usual in arming scenes, comes last in the order of Odysseus' arms, but the rest of the scene is completely atypical in order and description, both because the arms themselves are atypical and because the poet is describing the simultaneous arming of two warriors. The extreme anomaly is of course contextually consistent with the anomalous nature of their mission, but a more productive comparison can obviously be made between scenes which share the same fundamental structure and depart from it only in detail or extent of elaboration. It will then be possible to inquire whether the specializations and elaborations are contextually motivated and integrated into the themes of the *Iliad* as a whole or are instead related only to compositional considerations.

The arming of Achilles and that of Patroklos are the obvious passages in the *Iliad* to analyze for contextual motivation of variations, since they deal with the central figures of the epic at climactic points in the narrative, and I will attempt to show how their respective arming scenes—and the associated episodes of the exchange of arms and the *Hoplopoiia*—are related to each other and to other arming scenes and how they are integrated into the thematic and conceptual context of the *Iliad*. It may be best to

begin with the most elaborate and most problematic of these episodes, since the authenticity of the passage which describes the forging of Achilles' shield, *Iliad* XVIII. 483-608, has always been questioned by scholars. Perhaps the doubt about it originated with Zenodotos' athetesis, which Aristonikos attests in ΣA.[4]

> ὅτι Ζηνόδοτος ἠθέτηκεν ἀπὸ τούτου (484) τοῦ στίχου τὰ λοιπά, ἀρκεσθεὶς τῇ κεφαλαιώδει προεκθέσει.

Despite Zenodotos' well known ruthlessness in athetizing lines, his athetesis of this passage indicates that some of the manuscripts available to him did not contain it. Zenodotos was not only "satisfied" with the introductory lines about the shield; he was also dissatisfied with the attestation of the remaining lines. The dubious manuscript attestation of this passage was probably at least partially due to its language and subject matter, both of which are very different from the rest of the *Iliad.*

Both Zenodotos' athetesis and the unusual language of the passage have led to much conjecture about the passage's origin; the principal hypotheses are that the passage was either the product of the late, post-Homeric tradition or the deliberate interpolation of an entirely separate poem after the Peisistratean recension. G. M. Bolling, who does not print the description of the shield in the main text of his *Ilias Atheniensium,* offers two possible sources from which an interpolation could have come, the *Kypria* and the *Aithiopis,* which he lumps with the *Ilioupersis* under the title of *Little Iliad.*[5] His only argument for the *Aithiopis* as the source of the description of the shield is that Memnon wore divine armor forged by Hephaistos, the making of which might have been described. This seems to me to be pure conjecture. His arguments for the *Kypria* are more fully developed; he thinks it is natural to assume that Thetis supplied Achilles with arms at the beginning of the war and that their manufacture was described in the *Kypria.* But Achilles' original arms are twice described in the *Iliad* as gifts from the gods to Peleus which Achilles inherited from him, XVII. 194-7 and XVIII. 82-5.

> ". . . . . τὸν [Πάτροκλος] ἀπώλεσα, τεύχεα δ' Ἕκτωρ
> δῃώσας ἀπέδυσε πελώρια, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι,
> καλά· τὰ μὲν Πηλῆϊ θεοὶ δόσαν ἀγλαὰ δῶρα
> ἤματι τῷ ὅτε σε βροτοῦ ἀνέρος ἔμβαλον εὐνῇ."

[4] G. M. Bolling, *The athetized Lines of the Iliad,* Baltimore, 1944, p. 161.
[5] *Ibid.,* pp. 161-162.

The question of interpolation has been extended by some to include the whole narrative theme of the exchange of armor between Achilles and Patroklos. Leaf, despite his unqualified admiration for the description of the shield, assigns the exchange of armor to his "Third Stratum". "The main portion of the (eighteenth) book, that which describes the making of the arms of Achilles, certainly cannot have been known to the Μῆνις: it has been already shown at length that the idea of the wearing of Achilles' arms by Patroklos, which prepares the way for the making of the new set, is superfluous in Π, and positively confusing in P." [6] P. J. Kakridis reaches the same conclusion in more modern terms which take the oral composition of the *Iliad* into account; he believes that it is a late theme, invented probably by Homer.[7]

There can be no doubt that the exchange of armor was a part of the original *Iliad*, for the theme is too well integrated in both the narrative and the symbolism of the Iliad to have been added after its initial composition. Nestor introduces the theme by proposing, in XI. 785-803, that Patroklos take Achilles' place and use his armor in order to relieve the Greeks, and in XV. 390-403 Patroklos decides to try to convince Achilles to enter the battle and borrows some of Nestor's words (XI. 792-3) to complete his decision.

> "τίς δ' οἶδ' εἴ κέν οἱ σὺν δαίμονι θυμὸν ὀρίνω
> παρειπών; ἀγαθὴ δὲ παραίφασίς ἐστιν ἑταίρου."
>
> (XV. 402-3)

This recalls Nestor's advice that Patroklos take Achilles' place, and Patroklos makes the same proposal to Achilles at XVI. 36-45. Achilles agrees at XVI. 64-69. In Book XVII., Hektor strips Patroklos' body (123-7) and puts the armor in a chariot to be taken to Troy (130-1), but then changes his mind (183-7) and puts the armor on (191-7). In Book XVIII., Achilles vows to avenge Patroklos' ἔλωρα (88-93) and promises to bring Hektor's head and the armor back to Patroklos (333-5). In XXII., he strips the armor from Hektor (367-9), and Homer did not neglect the detail of putting the armour into Achilles' chariot (399).

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6 W. Leaf and M. A. Bayfield, edd., *Iliad*, London, 1962, introductory notes on Book XVIII, vol. II, p. 430.

7 A. Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature*, translated by J. Willis and C. de Heer, New York, 1966, p. 29, note, cites P. J. Kakridis, "Achilleus' Rüstung", *Hermes* LXXXIX (1961), p. 288.

The preparation for the exchange of arms is well established in the narrative, and it is followed up well after the loss of the armor to Hektor. The arming scenes involved in the exchange also fit the pattern of arming scenes found elsewhere in the *Iliad*. Both the order of arming and the principal formulaic lines in Patroklos' arming in XVI., and those in Achilles' arming in XIX., are the same as those for Paris' arming in III. and Agamemnon's in XI. To take Achilles' arming as the example.

κνημῖδας μὲν πρῶτα περὶ κνήμῃσιν ἔθηκε
καλάς, ἀργυρέοισιν ἐπισφυρίοις ἀραρυίας·
δεύτερον αὖ θώρηκα περὶ στήθεσσιν ἔδυνεν.
ἀμφὶ δ'ἄρ' ὤμοισιν βάλετο ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον
χάλκεον· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα σάκος μέγα τε στιβαρόν τε . . . .
(XIX. 369-73)

The first two lines are the same as III. 330-1, XI. 17-18, and XVI. 131-2. XIX. 371 is the same as III. 332, XI. 19, and XVI. 133; XIX. 372-3 is the same as III. 334-5 and XVI. 135-6, but only the first part of XI. 29 is like XIX. 372. In addition, XVI. 137-8 is the same as III. 336-7 and XI. 41-2.

κρατὶ δ'ἐπ' ἰφθίμῳ κυνέην εὔτυκτον ἔθηκεν
ἵππουριν· δεινὸν δὲ λόφος καθύπερθεν ἔνευεν.

The correspondence between the passages is not exact; it is natural in using the same order and formulae, mixed with other elements. The arming of Patroklos is particularly distinguished by the verb used to describe it; in Patroklos' case, the introductory line is:

Ὣς φάτο, Πάτροκλος δὲ κορύσσετο νώροπι χαλκῷ.
(*Iliad* XVI. 130)

The only other uses of the unaugmented inceptive imperfect of κορύσσω in the *Iliad* are found in the arming of Achilles (XIX. 364), as he is about to reenter the battle, and that of Aias (VII. 206) just before his duel with Hektor. In both cases, the initial descriptive verb is reinforced by a following, generalized word for arming—ἕσσατο for Aias (VII. 207) akd δύσετο for Achilles (XIX. 368)—but for Patroklos, there is no following generalized verb for dressing; he "helms himself" in general, and then proceeds to the specific details of arming.

κνημῖδας μὲν πρῶτα περὶ κνήμῃσιν ἔθηκε
καλάς, ἀργυρέοισιν ἐπισφυρίοις ἀραρυίας·
(*Iliad* XVI. 131-132)

This seems a minor departure from the usual pattern based on δύω or ἕννυμι, especially considering the metrical differences between the available verbs, until one remembers that the unaugmented inceptive is nowhere else used in isolation—nor, in fact, is any augmented form of either the aorist or the imperfect. This idiosyncracy in the description of Patroklos' arming is matched by Homer's elaboration on his death; Patroklos is destroyed by three figures—Apollo, Euphorbos, and Hektor—yet particular emphasis is placed on the loss of his helmet.

> στῆ [Φοῖβος] δ' ὄπιθεν, πλῆξεν δὲ μετάφρενον εὐρέε τ' ὤμω
> χειρὶ καταπρηνεῖ, στρεφεδίνηθεν δέ οἱ ὄσσε.
> τοῦ δ' ἀπὸ μὲν κρατὸς κυνέην βάλε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων·
> ἡ δὲ κυλινδομένη καναχὴν ἔχε ποσσὶν ὑφ' ἵππων
> αὐλῶπις τρυφάλεια, μιάνθησαν δὲ ἔθειραι
> αἵματι καὶ κονίῃσι· πάρος γε μὲν οὐ θέμις ἦεν
> ἱππόκομον πήληκα μιαίνεσθαι κονίῃσιν,
> ἀλλ' ἀνδρὸς θείοιο κάρη χαρίεν τε μέτωπον
> ῥύετ' Ἀχιλλῆος· τότε δὲ Ζεὺς Ἕκτορι δῶκεν
> ᾗ κεφαλῇ φορέειν, σχεδόθεν δέ οἱ ἦεν ὄλεθρος.
>
> (*Iliad* XVI. 793-800)

It may be possible, from a pragmatic, positivistic point of view, to argue that the parallel between the anomalously isolated κορύσσετο of Patroklos' arming and the prominently emphasized κυνέην of his death is coincidental, but it seems obvious to me that Patroklos' "helming" is isolated by its idiosyncratic diction because his defeat is the result of his "unhelming" by Apollo. This sort of episodic cross-referencing illustrates the best aspects of compositional facility; the poet is not only presenting a death scene which stands out because of unparalleled participation by gods and mortals, he is also relating that scene reciprocally to its compositional anticipation in a typical scene—a patterned episode, the dictional pattern of which is broken in order to achieve the specialized elaboration which will fit its context both thematically and narratively.[8]

The exchange of arms between Achilles and Patroklos fits well in the narrative and conforms with the pattern of other scenes involving arms; it also fits the system of symbolism which surrounds arms in the *Iliad* and which is evident in other exchanges of arms. This is especially evident in XIV. 370-83, where Poseidon rallies

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[8] Cf. Arend, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

the Greek forces and orders the best men to take the best arms and the lesser men to give their good arms to the better. This reflects the same attitude as the exchange in VI. 212-36, where Diomedes, in a semicomical contest of wits, takes the golden arms of Glaukos in exchange for his own bronze armor, and the better man again gets the better armor. This connection of Lykian Glaukos with an unprofitable change of arms is interesting, because in Book XVII. Hektor first sends Achilles' armor back to Troy, and it is only after Glaukos rebukes him for cowardice in not facing Aias and Menelaos (140-68) that Hektor decides to put on Achilles' armor. It is a bad decision, as Zeus declares immediately after Hektor has put on the armor (198-208), for Hektor is attempting, with the armor, to undertake a role of which he is not capable, as did Patroklos when he tried to take Achilles' place.

It is clear that armor in the *Iliad* represents stature or strength which can, to a certain extent, be put on and taken off. The arming scenes before *aristeiai* are more than descriptive embellishments; they are anticipations of the heroes' exploits. Agamemnon's arming, XI. 16-46, the closest parallel to the description of Achilles' armor, is a prelude to his subsequent prowess in battle, a citation of his credentials. After he has lost Patroklos and his armor, Achilles knows that there is no armor of fitting stature for him to wear, unless it be Aias'.

> "ἄλλου δ' οὔ τευ οἶδα τεῦ ἂν κλυτὰ τεύχεα δύω,
> εἰ μὴ Αἴαντός γε σάκος Τελαμωνιάδαο."
>
> (XVIII. 192-3)

The emphasis on the shield as the most important piece of armor, an idea previously associated with Aias, is here transferred to Achilles by his own words; also, by citing Aias' most characteristic piece of armor, Achilles stresses that the armor was one of the principal means of identifying the heroes, an important element of their identity.

Putting on armor represents donning one's personal prowess; in XIX. 36, Thetis urges Achilles, "αἶψα μάλ' ἐς πόλεμον θωρήσσεο, δύσεο δ'ἀλκήν", as in IX. 231, Odysseus told him, "δύσεαι ἀλκήν". Similarly, to have one's armor taken off by someone else represents defeat or even death. It is for this reason that Achilles swears to avenge the ἕλωρα of Patroklos, and Patroklos himself, beaten by Hektor and the gods, says,

"ἤδη νῦν, Ἕκτορ, μεγάλ' εὔχεο· σοὶ γὰρ ἔδωκε
νίκην Ζεὺς Κρονίδης καὶ Ἀπόλλων, οἵ με δάμασσαν
ῥηιδίως· αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀπ' ὤμων τεύχε' ἕλοντο.

(XVI. 844-6)

This symbolic defeat by losing one's armor holds also for the gods; Athene defeats Ares and prevents him from avenging Askalaphos by taking away his arms (XV. 113-27). To take one's own arms off in the face of an enemy is an admission of defeat (XXII. 111-21).

Armor does not, however, represent only personal strength and stature; in Achilles' case it is also the symbol of ancestral, inherited strength. The lineage of his original armor is given when Hektor puts it on after having stripped Patroklos' body.

. . . . ὁ δ' ἄμβροτα τεύχεα δῦνε
Πηλεΐδεω Ἀχιλῆος, ἅ οἱ θεοὶ Οὐρανίωνες
πατρὶ φίλῳ ἔπορον· ὁ δ' ἄρα ᾧ παιδὶ ὄπασσε
γηράς· ἀλλ' οὐχ υἱὸς ἐν ἔντεσι πατρὸς ἐγήρα.

(XVII. 194-7)

Achilles' original armor, although divine, was inherited from his mortal parent; the new armor with which Thetis supplies Achilles is divine in all senses and lends him new stature which fits his immortal parentage. The element of continuity which connects them and gives Achilles the strength of both his parents is Peleus' spear, the only piece of the original armor not replaced by Hephaistos. When Patroklos arms, it is made clear that he does not take Achilles' spear, which only Achilles was able to wield.

ἔγχος δ' οὐχ ἕλετ' οἶον ἀμύμονος Αἰακίδαο,
βριθὺ μέγα στιβαρόν· τὸ μὲν οὐ δύνατ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν
πάλλειν, ἀλλά μιν οἶος ἐπίστατο πῆλαι Ἀχιλλεύς,
Πηλιάδα μελίην, τὴν πατρὶ φίλῳ πόρε Χείρων
Πηλίου ἐκ κορυφῆς, φόνον ἔμμεναι ἡρώεσσιν.

(XVI. 140-4)

Peleus' spear is made a special symbol of Achilles' mortal prowess, just as the arms forged by Hephaistos, and especially the shield, become the symbol of his immortal stature. The description and lineage of the spear are repeated when Achilles arms (XIX. 388-91), and it is this spear which Athene returns to him after his unsuccessful cast and with which he kills Hektor, fulfilling its promise to be death for heroes. Its importance is emphasized by the simile comparing it to a shining star just before Achilles kills Hektor (XXII. 317-20).[9]

[9] For a complete discussion of the significance of the spear, see Part III.

Peleus' spear links Achilles with his mortal ancestry; his new armor links him with his immortal parent and, through her, with Hephaistos, its forger, and his attribute, fire. As Achilles arms, the shining of his shield is compared to a fire seen from the sea (XIX. 374-8), and in the battle he is compared to a raging forest fire (XX. 490-2). In Book XXI., he takes Hephaistos' place by fighting the Xanthos, or Skamander (233-341), and is finally joined by Hephaistos, who uses fire to fight the river (342-82). The similes at the beginning of Book XXII., comparing Achilles' armor with Orion's brightness (26-32) and with fire and the rising sun, reinforce the association. By putting on the armor Achilles acquired the strength of Hephaistos' attribute, fire, which represents his immortal ancestry. Hephaistos' special association with immortality is also attested by the scholiastic tradition on *Iliad* XIV. 238, where Hera promises that Hephaistos will make a θρόνον ἄφθιτον αἰεί; the scholiast observes that πάντα δὲ τὰ ἡφαιστότευκτα ἄφθιτά φησιν.[10]

Achilles' armor and his exchange of armor with Patroklos are both so well integrated into the narrative and imagery of the *Iliad* that they could not be removed and must be the products of the original author, even if they are late themes. If one accepts this conclusion, he must also accept the *Hoplopoiia* as a part of that original product, and the question becomes whether the shield has a legitimate place in the *Hoplopoiia*. Ornamental descriptions are common throughout the *Iliad* on a smaller scale; I have already mentioned the detailed description of Agamemnon's arms (XI. 16-46). There is a lengthy description of Hephaistos' work when Thetis arrives at his house (XVIII. 372-81), and he tells more about his work when he recalls how Thetis and Eurynome saved him (393-409). There follows an account of how Hephaistos cleans up his equipment (410-16), and after his conversation with Thetis there is a detailed description of his preparations for work (468-77). Here I tend to agree with the scholiast who attests Zenodotos' athetesis and objects to it.

> Ὅμηρος δὲ οὐκ ἂν προετραγῴδησαν τὰ κατὰ τὰς φύσας, εἰ μὴ καὶ τὴν τῆς ποικιλίας κατασκευὴν ἔμελλε διατίθεσθαι.[11]

The very short description of the armor which would be left after the removal of the description of the shield would not justify such

[10] ΣT to *Iliad* XIV. 238, Dindorf/Maas vol. VI, p. 78; see also Nagy, *Comparative Studies in Greek and Indic Meter, op. cit.*, pp. 241-242.

[11] Bolling, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

extended preliminaries; it would be only nine lines long (478-82 and 610-3, eliminating 609 which would be repetitive so soon after 478).

The shield is of primary importance throughout the making of the arms; it is the first thing which Thetis asks for (XVIII. 457) and the first thing Hephaistos makes (478). Because of the natural order of arming, it cannot be the first thing Achilles puts on; so its importance is asserted by attaching a simile to it, comparing it to a fire seen from the sea (XIX. 373-80). To devote only five lines to the shield in the *Hoplopoiia* would be to deny the importance which the simile indicates it has.

The surrounding narrative indicates that the shield has the importance which the long description in the *Hoplopoiia* attributes to it, but its imagistic implications are more difficult to establish. Schadewaldt agrees with Lessing that it is "einem Inbegriff von allem, was in der Welt vorgeht",[12] and believes that the shield is a symbol of world- and life-order, given to Achilles by the gods as soon as he has accepted his own death by deciding to re-enter the fighting.[13] Reinhardt sees another contrast between the festive scenes on the shield and the ensuing narrative in the *Iliad*.[14] There is certainly a contrast between the scenes on the shield and the battle action in the narrative, and it is difficult to establish whether it is a life-death contrast or one between peace and war or fertility and sterility. The symbolism of the shield is general and non-allegorical, like the similes of the *Iliad*; it is not making a point-by-point comparison of two ways of life but creates an ambience which as a whole comments on the brutal war portrayed in the *Iliad*.

There seems to be no legitimate literary reason for excluding the description of the shield from the *Iliad* as it was originally composed. It is extraordinary, but it occurs in an extraordinary and climactic context and is justified both by the circumstances of the narrative and by the symbolism which surrounds it and the armor. Achilles' reentry into the battle is emphasized by the exchange of arms and by the exceptional description of his new arms, both within and outside the usual context of the arming scene. Whether or not the description of the shield is interpreted as a symbolic sketch of the

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[12] W. Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk*, Stuttgart, 1959, p. 352.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 352-374.

[14] Lesky, *op. cit.*, p. 29, cites K. Reinhardt, "Der Schild des Achilleus", *Freundesgabe für E. R. Curtius*, Berne, 1956, p. 67.

world which Achilles is leaving behind as he bears it into battle to meet his death, the shield is clearly a reaffirmation of Achilles' immortal side through his association first with Thetis and then with Hephaistos. The importance of Achilles' immortal associations is matched by the other specialized variation in his arming scene—his inherited spear, which represents his paternal, superficially mortal side. This specialization of the typical scene appears minor in comparison to the *Hoplopoiia*, yet when it is examined thoroughly in relation to its context, it reveals the extent to which compositional elaboration and specialized thematic integration can coincide in the most fully realized examples of oral poetry; A. B. Lord has perceived the same potential complexity and sophistication in his comprehensive study of oral composition.

> The nontraditional literary artist, sensing the force of the traditional material whence his art was derived, but no longer comprehending it, no longer finding acceptable the methods of the traditional, sought to compensate for this lack by intricacies of construction created for their own sake. The old patterns were not only thus given new meanings, but a kind of complexity, which could be attained only through writing, was also cultivated as an end in itself. When we look at oral poetry and observe in it something that looks like these new forms and complexities, we may be deluded. Enamored of the meretricious virtues of art, we may fail to understand the real meaning of a traditional poem. That meaning cannot be brought to light by elaborate schematization, unless that schematization be based on the elements of oral tradition, on the still dynamic multiform patterns in the depths of primitive myth.[15]

I will attempt to show that art is a part of, not a departure from, traditional methods of composition, and that elaboration and specialization are extensions of the very myths which form the bases of the oral poet's methods and motivation—reflexes of the same fundamental human impulse as that which produces "the meretricious virtues of art."

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[15] A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, New York, 1965, p. 221.

CHAPTER THREE

ACHILLES' ASH SPEAR

When Patroklos, compelled by Nestor's persuasion and by the desperate situation of the Greek forces, arms in order to replace Achilles in the battle as the leader of the Myrmidons, he puts on all of Achilles' armor (XVI. 130-138), and Achilles' horses are yoked for him (145-154), but Patroklos specifically does not take the ash spear which Achilles had inherited from his father.

> εἵλετο δ' ἄλκιμα δοῦρε, τά οἱ παλάμηφιν ἀρήρει.
> ἔγχος δ' οὐχ ἕλετ' οἶον ἀμύμονος Αἰακίδαο,
> βριθὺ μέγα στιβαρόν· τὸ μὲν οὐ δύνατ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν
> πάλλειν, ἀλλά μιν οἶος ἐπίστατο πῆλαι Ἀχιλλεύς,
> Πηλιάδα μελίην, τὴν πατρὶ φίλῳ πόρε Χείρων
> Πηλίου ἐκ κορυφῆς, φόνον ἔμμεναι ἡρώεσσιν.
>
> (XVI. 139-144)

The description of Achilles' spear in the final four lines of this passage is repeated when Achilles arms (XIX. 388-391), in the same position in the arming sequence; the first two lines of the passage about Patroklos' arming are replaced in Book XIX by a single line which fits the different situation.

> ἐκ δ' ἄρα σύριγγος πατρώϊον ἐσπάσατ' ἔγχος,
>
> (XIX. 387)

This emphasis on Achilles' ash spear in both arming scenes, which are preparatory for the great deeds each hero will perform in the ensuing battles, indicates the importance of the spear as a very personal part of Achilles' armament. Not only is Achilles the only warrior among the Greeks capable of wielding it; the spear is also the only piece of the original armor, which Achilles received from Peleus, not lost to Hektor with Patroklos. Thus the ash spear is both an expression of Achilles' exceptional strength and a reaffirmation of his connection with his mortal parent, just as his new armor connects him with his immortal mother. For these descriptions of the spear clearly indicate that it was a separate piece given Peleus by Cheiron and not a part of the armor given him by the gods as a wedding gift (XVII. 194-197; XVIII. 82-85).

The substantive μελίη is used in these arming scenes to mean "ash spear"; it also has the additional, and apparently more basic, meaning of "ash tree". As might be expected in an epic primarily concerned with war, the majority of the occurrences of μελίη in the *Iliad* has the meaning of "ash spear"—eleven, in contrast to only two occurrences in which the word means "ash tree". Again predictably, both of the latter cases occur in similes. In the first of them, Imbrios, the son of Mentor and husband of Priam's bastard daughter Medesikaste, is compared to a tree felled in the mountains, when he is killed by Teukros: ὁ δ' αὖτ' ἔπεσεν μελίη ὥς . . . . (XIII. 177-180). In the second simile, the Trojans and Greeks are likened in their attack to a forest of storm-tossed trees, and the name of the ash occurs in a list of three types of trees.

> φηγόν τε μελίην τε τανύφλοιόν τε κράνειαν
> αἵ τε πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἔβαλον τανυήκεας ὄζους . . . . .
>
> (XVI. 767-8)

With the exception of the two passages above, the word μελίη always means "ash spear" in the *Iliad*; moreover, when it is used in the singular, as it is in ten of its eleven occurrences, it always refers specifically to the ash spear which Achilles inherited from Peleus. Achilles' ash spear quite naturally does not appear before Patroklos' arming, but after its appearance there (XVI. 143) and in the arming of Achilles (XIX. 390), the word μελίη for Achilles' spear occurs throughout the ensuing scenes of battle (XX. 277, 322; XXI, 162, 169, 174; XXII. 133, 225, and 328). This restriction of μελίη to the description of a single weapon is a striking confirmation of the observation above which remarked the individuality and significance of the ash spear as the link between Achilles and his mortal father Peleus, and an examination of its function in the narrative of the *Iliad* should provide some useful evidence about the structure and themes of the epic.

The single exception to this remarkably consistent use of μελίη to designate only Achilles' spear is in the catalogue of ships.

> Οἳ δ' Εὔβοιαν ἔχον μένεα πνείοντες Ἄβαντες,
> Χαλκίδα τ' Εἰρέτριάν τε πολυστάφυλόν θ' Ἱστίαιαν
> Κήρινθόν τ' ἔφαλον Δίου τ' αἰπὺ πτολίεθρον,
> οἵ τε Κάρυστον ἔχον ἠδ' οἳ Στύρα ναιετάασκον,
> τῶν αὖθ' ἡγεμόνευ' Ἐλεφήνωρ, ὄζος Ἄρηος,
> Χαλκωδοντιάδης, μεγαθύμων ἀρχὸς Ἀβάντων.
> τῷ δ' ἅμ' Ἄβαντες ἕποντο θοοί, ὄπιθεν κομόωντες,

αἰχμηταὶ μεμαῶτες ὀρεκτῇσιν μελίῃσι
θώρηκας ῥήξειν δηΐων ἀμφὶ στήθεσσι·
τῷ δ' ἅμα τεσσαράκοντα μέλαιναι νῆες ἕποντο.

(II. 536-545)

This occurrence is in itself anomalous; it is the only use of μελίη in the plural in the whole of the *Iliad* and might safely be segregated from its occurrences in the singular for that reason alone. These spears are in addition specifically described as thrusting spears, in contrast to Achilles' spear, which, when it is described with the word μελίη, is exclusively thrown, with the noteworthy exception of the slaying of Hektor (XXII. 326-329). The scholiast notes the restricted function assigned to the Abantes' spears here.

ὀρεκτῇσι μελίῃσι] τοῖς ἐκ χειρῶν δόρασιν, οἷς ὀρέγδην ἐχρῶντο συνιστάμενοι καὶ ἐκτείνοντες αὐτά· ἐξ οὗ θαρσαλέοι· ὀρέξασθαι γάρ ἐστι τὸ ἐκ χειρὸς πατάξαι.[1]

The inclination to disregard this single exception to the otherwise consistent use of μελίη might be further increased simply because it does appear in the catalogue, the diction of which tends to be anomalous, and because, within the catalogue, it immediately precedes the frequently questioned description of the Athenian contingent, with its subordination of Salaminian Aias to the Athenian forces (II. 546-558).[2]

The subtlety and complexity of Homeric composition should, however, discourage that sort of casual dismissal of an apparent inconsistency and should encourage a more careful consideration of the use of the ash spear in this passage. The Abantes, and more specifically their leader Elephenor, appear only once more in the *Iliad.*

τὸν δὲ πεσόντα ποδῶν ἔλαβε κρείων Ἐλεφήνωρ
Χαλκωδοντιάδης, μεγαθύμων ἀρχὸς Ἀβάντων . . . . .

(IV. 463-464; IV. 464 = II. 541)

In this passage, Elephenor, attempting to despoil the body of Echepolos, who had been killed by Antilochos, is himself killed by Agenor (IV. 457-470). It is, consequently, necessary to look outside Homer for further indications of the identity of the Abantes and of the possible reasons for their possession of ash spears.

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[1] ΣA to *Iliad*, II. 543; Dindorf vol. I., p. 118.

[2] The Abantes also immediately follow the description of Lokrian Aias, so that they and the Athenian forces are bracketed by the two Aiantes, both narratively and geographically.

So far as the identity of the Abantes is concerned, Homer's information appears to be relatively complete; the list of towns which he attributes to their rule includes six of the seven later major towns of Euboia (Chalkis, Eretria, Histiaia [later Oreos], Dion, Karystos, and Styra; Homer does not mention Dystos and adds Kerinthos on the northeast coast, which is correctly described as ἔφαλος.). The other details of Homer's description correspond to the reports of later sources, and none of the additional information which the later sources furnish about the Abantes indicates any connection between their ash spears and that of Achilles.[3] However,

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[3] Pauly-Wissowa, *RE*, vol. I. coll. 13-15; cf. Bursian, *Quaestionum Euboicarum capita selecta*, Leipzig, 1856, pp. 5 ff. Many of the sources for the following discussion were obtained from Pauly-Wissowa, vol. I. coll. 13-15, for the Abantes, and coll. 18-19, for Abas, and from the essentially parallel account of Abas given by Roscher, *Lexikon*, vol. I. coll. 1-2.

Two of the characteristics attributed to the Abantes by Homer are related to each other by Plutarch in his description of the way in which the young Theseus cut his hair.

> ἐκείρατο δὲ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὰ πρόσθεν μόνον ὥσπερ Ὅμηρος ἔφη τοὺς Ἄβαντας· καὶ τοῦτο τῆς κουρᾶς τὸ γένος Θησηῒς ὠνομάσθη δι' ἐκεῖνον.
>
> Οἱ δὲ Ἄβαντες ἐκείραντο πρῶτοι τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον ..... ὄντες πολεμικοὶ καὶ ἀγχέμαχοι, καὶ μάλιστα δὴ πάντων εἰς χεῖρας ὠθεῖσθαι τοῖς ἐναντίοις μεμαθηκότες, ὡς μαρτυρεῖ καὶ Ἀρχίλοχος ἐν τούτοις·
>
> Οὔ τοι πόλλ' ἐπὶ τόξα τανύσσεται οὐδὲ θαμειαὶ
> σφενδόναι, εὖτ' ἂν δὴ μῶλον Ἄρης συνάγῃ
> ἐν πεδίῳ, ξιφέων δὲ πολύστονον ἔσσεται ἔργον·
> ταύτης γὰρ κεῖνοι δαίμονές εἰσι μάχης
> δεσπόται Εὐβοίας δουρικλυτοί.....
>
> ὅπως οὖν μὴ παρέχοιεν ἐκ τῶν τριχῶν ἀντίληψιν τοῖς πολεμίοις ἀπεκείραντο.

Plutarch, *Theseus* 5. 1-4 (Archilochos= Bergk, *Poet. Lyr. Gr.*[4], II. p. 383). Plutarch also comments that this was the reason for Alexander's demand that his generals shave their beards. Here the Abantes' renown as spearmen and their prowess in hand-to-hand combat is linked to their haircuts; Eustathios in his comment on this passage gives the same reason for the style and notes that it was considered a sign of courage (Stallbaum, 282, 1 ff.). Eustathios also notes that archery was considered cowardly among them and, like the scholiast, makes a careful distinction not only between thrusting and throwing spears but also between ash spears and others.

> εἰσὶ δὲ μελίαι μὲν τὰ δόρατα διότι ἀπὸ ξύλου μελίας ἐσκευάζετο, ὀρεκταὶ δὲ αἱ ἐκτεινόμεναι κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων, ἵνα εἶεν Ἄβαντες αἰχμηταὶ οἱ μὴ ἀφιέντες τὰς αἰχμάς, ὀρέγοντες δὲ ταῖς χερσὶ καὶ οὕτω πλήσσοντες·.... ἔγνωσται οὖν ἐκ τοῦ τοιούτου λόγου σαφῶς, ὅτι ὀρεκτὰ δόρατα τὰ μὴ ἐκπετόμενα τῶν χειρῶν κατὰ τὴν ἰθυπτίωνα μελίην, ἀλλὰ ἐν τῷ κρατεῖσθαι βάλλοντα.
>
> (Stallbaum, 282, 10 ff.)

Eustathios offers in addition a very detailed geography of Euboia, with appropriate ethnographic comments (Stallbaum, 278, 23-281, 16).

Elephenor's rather appropriately named ancestor (χαλκώδων = "bronze-beaked", LSJ) indicates the direction to a solution, for although there is a confusing number of different accounts of the origin of the Abantes,[4] Chalkodon was the son of Abas, the eponymous hero customarily associated with the Abantes,[5] and the repeated mention of him makes it clear that the Homeric Abantes, at least, were considered to be the descendants of Abas.

Abas was Argive in origin, the grandson of Danaos and the son of Lynkeus and Hypermnestra, and he was credited with founding Abai in Phokis and a colony in Thessaly, and with subduing the whole of Euboia, which he subsequently ruled.[6] But it is the Argive

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[4] The most prevalent alternative account of the origin of the Abantes is that they came to Euboia from Phokian Abai; Strabo quotes Aristotle as his authority for this theory but also notes the opposing view favoring Abas as eponymous hero.

> Οὐ μόνον δὲ Μάκρις ἐκλήθη ἡ νῆσος, ἀλλὰ καὶ 'Αβαντίς..... φησὶ δ' 'Αριστοτέλης ἐξ "Αβας τῆς Φωκικῆς Θρᾷκας ὁρμηθέντας ἐποικῆσαι τὴν νῆσον καὶ ἐπονομάσαι "Αβαντας τοὺς ἔχοντας αὐτήν· οἱ δ' ἀπὸ ἥρωός φασι, καθάπερ καὶ Εὔβοιαν ἀπὸ ἡρωίνης.
>
> (*Geographika*, X. 445)

Wilamowitz (Euripides' *Herakles*, Berlin, 1889, vol. II, pp. 91-92) endorses this view and believes that the Abantes were driven from Phokis to Euboia by the immigrating Boiotians. Eustathios first paraphrases Strabo's account (Stallbaum, 281, 16-37) and then offers a further connection between the Abantes and Attika by tracing their lineage back to the Erechtheids (281, 38-282, 1).

[5] Although the genealogy given for Abas varies (see note 6), in almost all of the versions Chalkodon appears as the son or descendant of Abas; e.g., schol. Euripides *Hekabe* 125 (Dindorf, vol. I, p. 252) and Eustathios on the *Iliad* (Stallbaum, 281. 41-282. 1), where Elephenor is also named as the son of Chalkodon. But Chalkodon is particularly strongly associated with the Argive Abas who subdued Euboia; for further sources consult the citations for Abas' genealogy in the next note.

[6] The most prevalent genealogy of Abas as the son of Lynkeus and Hypermnestra is widely attested; Aristotle twice uses Theodektes' tragedy *Lynkeus* as an illustration of points raised in the *Poetics* (1452 a. 24-29; 1455 b. 29-32). The action of the play, centered around Danaos' attempt to execute Lynkeus and a reversal to the execution of Danaos, is unclear, but Abas seemingly appeared either as an infant or a child— see D. W. Lucas' (Oxford, 1968) comment on 1452 a. 24-26 (p. 130). The scholiast on Pindar, *Pythian* VIII. 77 (55), supports the genealogy with a tragic citation of unknown origin (*Trag. Fr. Adesp.* 454).

> ἰστέον ὅτι "Αβας ὁ Λυγκέως ᾤκησε τὸ "Αργος, εἶτα μετέστη εἰς Εὔβοιαν. ὅτι δὲ Λυγκέως "Αβας, ἐξ ἐκείνου δῆλον·
>
> σφαγὰς δὲ Δαναοῦ παρθένων Λυγκεὺς φυγών,
> "Αβαντα φύει διάδοχον τυραννίδος.
>
> (Drachmann II. 214)

Apollodoros, *Bibliotheke* II. 2. 1 (cf. I. 9. 13), extends the line from the same

Abas who clarifies the parallel between Abas and Achilles, which is perhaps most easily approached through Virgil's single reference to Abas, whose shield Aeneas leaves as an offering at Actium.

> aere cavo clipeum magni gestamen Abantis,
> postibus adversis figo et rem carmine signo:
> AENEAS HAEC DE DANAIS VICTORIBUS ARMA.
>
> (*Aeneid*, III. 286-288)

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origin downward to Melampous; Pausanias, II. 16. 1-2, traces Abas' genealogy back through nine generations to Phoroneus, who was not only the progenitor of the Argive royal family but was also the Argive first man and the discoverer of fire for mankind. The importance of this connection will become clear in the later discussion of Phoroneus as the son of Melia, the ash-tree nymph; cf. Pausanias X. 35. 1.

The other versions of Abas' lineage fall into three main groups; Apollodoros at one point calls him the son of Melampous (I. 9. 13), rather than Melampous' father, which he calls him at II. 2. 1, and the scholiast on Apollonios Rhodios I. 139-144 says that Abas was the son of Melampous and the descendant of Aiolos. There is no indication of any connection between this Abas and the Abantes, but the Argive Abas is occasionally identified as the son of Neptune or Poseidon and Arethusa and as the progenitor of the Abantes and of Chalkodon and Elephenor; see Hyginus, *Fabulae* 157; Eustathios on *Iliad* II. 542 (Stallbaum 281. 16-282. 1), where the progenitor of the Abantes, father of Chalkodon, and grandfather of Elephenor is identified as the son of Poseidon and Arethusa; and Eustathios on Dionysios Periegetes 520 (Bernhardy I, p. 202), where the son of Poseidon and Arethusa is also called Argive. Finally, there is a persistent connection between Abas, the Abantes, and the ruling families of Attika, sometimes through friendship (schol. Euripides *Hekabe* 125, Dindorf, vol. I. p. 252), but more usually by direct relationship to the Erechtheids through Alkon or Metion; see Eustathios on the same passage (Stallbaum 281. 38-40) and especially Johannes Toepffer, *Attische Genealogie*, Berlin, 1889, pp. 163-165. Toepffer concludes that the evidence of ties between the Chalkodontidai and Attika is balanced by early conflicts, apparently reflecting a continuing relationship across the Euripos from the mouth of the Asopos.

For Abas as founder of Phokian Abai, see Pausanias X. 35. 1; Abas is also credited with founding Argos Pelasgikon in Thessaly, and it is interesting to note that the inhabitants of Argos Pelasgikon are included among Achilles' forces by Homer (*Iliad* II. 681-685).

> νῦν αὖ τοὺς ὅσσοι τὸ Πελασγικὸν Ἄργος ἔναιον,
> οἵ τ' Ἄλον οἵ τ' Ἀλόπην οἵ τε Τρηχῖνα νέμοντο,
> οἵ τ' εἶχον Φθίην ἠδ' Ἑλλάδα καλλιγύναικα,
> Μυρμιδόνες δὲ καλεῦντο καὶ Ἕλληνες καὶ Ἀχαιοί,
> τῶν αὖ πεντήκοντα νεῶν ἦν ἀρχὸς Ἀχιλλεύς.

Strabo (IX. 5. 6) quotes a part of this passage and notes the origin of the name from Abas, the founder. But clearly Abas' role as founder is most prominent for the Abantes of Euboia, where he is also the eponymous hero. Euboia was also known as Abantis at one time (Stephanos Byzantios, *s.v.* Ἀβαντίς, Westermann, p. 1, where Stephanos quotes fragment 3 of Hesiod's *Aigimios* [186 Rzach]).

Finally, the Euboian Abantes appear as early colonists in Ionia, and their

Servius' comment on line 286 affirms Abas' identity and explains the importance of Abas' shield.

> et hunc Abantem intellegamus occisum cum Androgeo apud Troiam, ut (II. 389) mutemus clipeos: sed Vergilius, amans inventa occasione recondita quaeque summatim et antiquam contingere fabulam, de Abante dixit. Abans namque, Lyncei et Hypermnestrae filius, viribus praestans, cum vicinas civitates subvertisset magnusque terror universis esset, diem supremum obiit. populi autem quos ille devicerat, regno eius infesti, manu facta urbem diruituri muros subiere, cumque in eo essent ut iam civitatis potirentur, senex quidam iuvenem egregiae formae securum in publico excidio notavit in foro, cumque ex eo quaesisset, cur patriae non succurreret, respondit, quod arma non haberet. tunc senex ei Abantis arma consecrata demonstrat hortatusque est ut eis uteretur: quibus tunc sumptis iuvenis properat in aciem. Hostes vero viso Abantis clipeo fugerunt. quidam sane Abantem inventorem clipei ferunt.

Later sources indicate that Abas' shield had originally belonged to his grandfather Danaos, who had placed it as an offering in the Heraion of Argos. Abas received the shield from his father Lynkeus, who took it from the wall of the temple and gave it to his son after Abas had arrived with the report of Danaos' death.

> Hypermnestra Lynceum servavit; qui cum Danaus perisset, primusque Abas ei nuntiasset, Lynceus circumspiciens in templo quid ei muneri daret, casu conspexit clipeum quem Danaus consecraverat Iunoni, quem in iuventa gesserat. refixit et donavit Abanti,

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importance is attested by Herodotos (I. 146). They appear in an especially interesting context on Chios; Pausanias cites Ion of Chios as his source for the following account of the conflict between the descendants of the Abantes and a Chian Hektor, himself the descendant of a Euboian.

> Ἀφίκοντο δὲ καὶ Κᾶρες ἐς τὴν νῆσον ἐπὶ τῆς Οἰνοπίωνος βασιλείας καὶ Ἄβαντες ἐξ Εὐβοίας. Οἰνοπίωνος δὲ καὶ τῶν παίδων ἔλαβεν ὕστερον Ἄμφικλος τὴν ἀρχήν· ἀφίκετο δὲ ἐξ Ἱστιαίας ὁ Ἄμφικλος τῆς ἐν Εὐβοίᾳ κατὰ μάντευμα ἐκ Δελφῶν. Ἕκτωρ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀμφίκλου τετάρτῃ γενεᾷ, βασιλείαν γὰρ ἔσχε καὶ οὗτος, ἐπολέμησεν Ἀβάντων καὶ Καρῶν τοῖς οἰκοῦσιν ἐν τῇ νήσῳ, καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἀπέκτεινεν ἐν ταῖς μάχαις, τοὺς δὲ ἀπελθεῖν ἠνάγκασεν ὑποσπόνδους.
> (Pausanias VII. 5.9)

Ferdinand Dümmler ("Hektor", Anhang II, pp. 194-205, in Franz Studniczka, *Kyrene, eine altgriechische Göttin*, Leipzig, 1890, esp. pp. 198-200) interprets this puzzling passage as a mythologizing elaboration of an historical immigration of Euboian Abantes which included Amphiklos, perhaps as its leader, and which brought the Euboian cult hero Hektor along. I can offer no better interpretation, but it is interesting to see Hektor again, as he was at Troy, on the side opposing the Abantes who may have been responsible for importing his cult, and to find the Abantes attested at the home of the Homeridai.

ludosque consecravit qui quinto quoque anno aguntur, qui appellantur ἀσπὶς ἐν Ἄργει. e quibus ludis cursoribus corona non datur sed clipeus.

(Hyginus, *Fabulae* 170: *Filiae Danai quae quos occiderunt*)[7]

This presentation was apparently identified with the origin of an Argive festival at which the victor received a shield rather than a crown as his prize, and ἡ ἐξ Ἄργους ἀσπίς appears in lists of festivals and victories.[8]

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[7] Compare Hyginus, *Fabulae* 273, a section entitled "Qui primi ludos fecerunt usque ad Aeneam quintum decimum", where a parallel account of the origin of the games is given with a short additional comment on one of the rules of the games which is unfortunately obscured by lacunae. See Rose's edition (1934, p. 163, note 3) for an attractive conjecture on the meaning of the passage. Compare also Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XV. 160-164, where Pythagoras identifies two of his former incarnations as Euphorbos and Abas, who is again identified by his characteristic shield.

"cognovi clipeum, laevae gestamina nostrae,
nuper Abanteis templo Iunonis in Argis!" (163-164)

This collocation of Euphorbos and Abas is interesting in light of subsequent events in the *Iliad*.

[8] See *CIG* 234, 1068, 2810, and 3208, and Hesychios *s.v.* ἀγὼν χαλκεῖος (Schmidt, vol. I, p. 39): τὰ ἐν Ἄργει ἑκατόμβαια. Friedrich Kenner (*Die Münzsammlung des Stiftes St. Florian in Oberösterreich*, Vienna, 1871, plate 6, fig. 3, and notes, p. 91) documents a coin with the head of Septimius Severus on the observe and, on the reverse, a myrtle crown surrounding the word HP/AIA (on two lines) under which is a horizontal shield. That the Heraia and the Hekatombaia were the same festival is confirmed by Pindar (*Nemean* X. 22-23; see also the scholiast on this passage, Drachmann, vol. III. p. 171.)

.... ἀγών τοι χάλκεος
δᾶμον ὀτρύνει ποτὶ βουθυσίαν Ἥρας
ἀέθλων τε κρίσιν·

and by the scholiast on Olympian VII. 83 (Drachmann, vol. I. pp. 230-231).

ὅ τ' ἐν Ἄργει χαλκός· τὰ Ἥραια, <ἃ> καὶ Ἑκατόμβαια λέγεται διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν θυομένων βοῶν.

It should, however, be noted that another scholiast on the same passage (Drachmann, *loc. cit.*) names the Argive king Archinos as the originator of the festival, and that no mention is made of Abas. The nature and form of the games themselves is unclear; see Boeckh (*Pindari Opera*, Leipzig, 1821, vol. III. pp. 174-175) on *Olympian* VII. 77-87 for a complete discussion of the problem. So far as the origin of the games is concerned, Boeckh notes the tradition of derivation from Abas but prefers another explanation.

Ille autem mos clypeum pro praemio dandi a Lynceo et Abante derivatur ap. Hygin. Fab. 273. verior causa est, quod clypeus et Iunonis et Argivorum insigne est.

For further discussion and evidence that there was a place in Argos also called the Aspis, see Plutarch, *Kleomenes* XVII. 4-5 and Karl Friedrich

Abas' unique and thaumaturgic shield, the central attribute of the legend surrounding him, is a striking parallel to Achilles' shield; it not only furnishes a connection with Abas' lineage and with the goddess to whom it was twice consecrated, but it also was the object of two exchanges of arms, and after the hero's death, it became the prize in a contest apparently in his honor. The Argive youth who takes up Abas' arms in order to avert imminent destruction does so at the urging of an old man, just as Patroklos takes up Achilles' arms—and his role in battle—at the repeated urging of Nestor, in a similar situation. The strongest parallel, however, is Abas' persistent association with a marvelous shield which had the power to terrify enemy forces, an association so prevalent that Abas was later identified as the inventor of the shield, even though his inheritance of an existing ancestral shield clearly precludes that function. That the possession of the μελίη, a weapon otherwise exclusively reserved for Achilles, is in the catalogue attributed to the Abantes, indicates an awareness of the parallel between the armament of Achilles and that of the progenitor of the Abantes in local Argive legend. It is impossible to know whether this awareness

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Hermann, *Lehrbuch der gottesdienstlichen Alterthümer der Griechen* (vol. II of his *Lehrbuch der griechischen Antiquitäten*), Heidelberg, 1846, para. 52, 2.

In addition to Abas' reputation as the inventor of the shield, his twin sons Proitos and Akrisios are sometimes credited with the invention in the course of their warfare over the throne.

> Λυγκεὺς δὲ μετὰ Δαναὸν Ἄργους δυναστεύων ἐξ Ὑπερμνήστρας τεκνοῖ παῖδα Ἄβαντα. τούτου δὲ καὶ Ἀγλαΐας τῆς Μαντινέως δίδυμοι παῖδες ἐγένοντο Ἀκρίσιος καὶ Προῖτος. οὗτοι καὶ κατὰ γαστρὸς μὲν ἔτι ὄντες ἐστασίαζον πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ὡς δὲ ἀνετράφησαν, περὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἐπολέμουν καὶ πολεμοῦντες εὗρον ἀσπίδας πρῶτοι.
>
> (Apollodoros, *Bibliotheke* II. 2. 1)

Or when Proitos and Akrisios are not themselves named as the inventors, the Argives are said to have used shields for the first time during the civil war between them.

> Ἄβαντος δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν Ἀργείων υἱοὶ ἦσαν ἐξ Ἀγλαΐας Προῖτος καὶ Ἀκρίσιος. οὗτοι μετὰ θάνατον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐστασίασαν περὶ τῆς τυραννίδος. φασὶ δὲ ὅτι ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τούτῳ πρῶτοι ξυλίναις ἀσπίσιν ἐχρήσαντο Ἀργεῖοι,....
>
> (Schol. Euripides, *Orestes* 965; Dindorf, vol. II. pp. 239-240)

Boeckh is obviously correct when he cites the special connection between the Argives and shields, but the connection is frequently traced to Abas or his sons, and the tradition associating Abas with the origin of the Heraia seems to me preferable to Boeckh's rather vague "Quod clypeus et Iunonis et Argivorum insigne est". A more specific aetiological myth would surely have been required for so important a festival, and Abas appears to be the most likely central figure for such an aetiology.

is the poet's own or is a part of his inherited tradition, but the restrictive care with which the poet of the *Iliad* uses the word μελίη everywhere else in the epic offers a compelling argument in favor of a personal awareness on his part. It is certain that Virgil later recognized the parallel between Abas and his own hero, for he has Aeneas consecrate Abas' shield as an offering at Actium, the site of the naval battle which furnishes the central ornament of Aeneas' own shield.

> In medio classis aeratas, Actia bella,
> cernere erat, totumque instructo Marte videres
> fervere Leucaten auroque effulgere fluctus.
> (*Aeneid* VIII. 675-677)

It is now necessary to consider the reasons behind the use of μελίη in a manner so consistent that even the single apparent exception fits the pattern of association with unique, individual arms which have special powers and divine connections. In order to examine the ways in which the ash spear is integrated into the themes and narrative of the *Iliad*, it must be determined whether the broader connotations and associations of the ash spear and the ash tree in Greek mythology coincide with the use and meaning of μελίη, and its adjectival derivatives με(ί)λινος and ἐϋμμελίης, in the *Iliad*. The five uses of these three words in the *Odyssey* show no particular consistency [9] and offer no correlation with the *Iliad* other than the observation that the restrictions on the use of these words are confined to the *Iliad*, which again indicates a special adaptation of traditional material to his own narrative by the poet. It is consequently necessary to look outside Homer for the mythological connotations of the ash which may have motivated this specialized adaptation.

In attempting to establish the relevant meanings of the ash, the first difficulty lies in the numerous different types of trees which have been designated by the name "ash" and which may have been meant by the word μελία. Of the true ashes, which are

[9] *Odyssey* III. 400, Nestor's son Peisistratos has the epithet ἐϋμμελίην; XIV. 281, Odysseus, in his lies to Eumaios, describes the Egyptians attacking him with μελίῃσιν; XVII. 336-341, Odysseus, upon entering his house for the first time, ἵζε δ' ἐπὶ μελίνου οὐδοῦ ἔντοσθε θυράων ..... (339); and XXII. 256-259 = 273-276 (except for one word in the first line of each: πάντα, 256; πολλά, 273), where Athene twice misdirects the spears of the suitors, so that the μελίη of one of them strikes the wall.

subsumed under the genus-name *Fraxinus* in contemporary botany, only two need to concern us, *Fraxinus excelsior*, the large, common European ash, and the smaller *Fraxinus ornus*, which is variously called the mountain ash, the flowering ash, or the manna ash, after the medicinal sap which is extracted from it.[10] One other tree generally considered an ash, the European mountain ash, or rowan tree, may also have been subsumed under the same term, even though this small, ornamental tree, distinguished by its white blossoms and red berries, belongs to an entirely different family (*Rosaceae*, the rose family) and to the genus *Sorbus* within that family and is generally referred to as *Sorbus aucuparia*.[11] Most modern authorities agree in the belief that the Greek μελία was the true mountain ash, *Fraxinus ornus*, to which I shall refer herafter as F. ornus. Their belief is based primarily on the modern distribution of F. ornus, which is now common in Greece proper, and of the European ash (hereafter F. excelsior), which is today found almost exclusively in the North, specifically in Illyria and Macedonia.[12] The smaller F. ornus, which never exceeds 15 m. in height, compared to a maximum of 28 m. for F. excelsior, is indeed better suited to the rocky, mountainous environment of Greece than is F. excelsior, which tends to be a tree of the lowlands, river-meadows, and mountain valleys.[13]

I am nonetheless unwilling to accept a blanket restriction of the term μελία to F. ornus for a number of reasons, the first of which is the virtual impossibility of establishing patterns of past distribution of the two species.

> As for the botanical evidence, most authorities (e.g., Firbas 1949, pp. 182-4) assert that the pollen is difficult to identify and that species cannot yet be distinguished. Lemmon and Firbas disagree about the exact amounts of pollen produced by the ash, but the yield is certainly small, and decomposes rapidly.[14]

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[10] J. E. Rogers, *The Tree Book*, New York, 1908, volume XI of The Nature Library, pp. 432 and 440-441; the ashes belong to the olive family (*Oleaceae*), but the relationship is established by morphological characteristics which are obvious only to botanists, and it is consequently not relevant to a discussion of ancient Greek attitudes toward the ash.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 294.

[12] Josef Murr, *Die Pflanzenwelt in der griechischen Mythologie*, Innsbruck, 1890, p. 27; also Pauly-Wissowa, XI (VI), coll. 617-618.

[13] Murr, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28, and Pauly-Wissowa, *loc. cit.*

[14] Paul Friedrich, *Proto-Indo-European Trees*, Chicago, 1970, p. 97.

This lack of conclusive botanical evidence, coupled with the proximity of Phthia to Macedonia, where F. excelsior reportedly appears today, argues against any dogmatic statement on the identity of the μελία; in addition, there is a consistent tendency throughout Europe to combine not only F. ornus and F. excelsior but also Sorbus aucuparia under a single term and to confuse them linguistically. An original Proto-Indo-European **os*- appears to have generated cognates in at least eight language stocks, including the Latin *ornus* (from **os-en-os* with rhotacism followed by syncope),[15] which came to be applied exclusively to Sorbus, while the derivative of the PIE term for birch (*Fraxinus*, from **bherVgos*) was applied to the true ashes.[16] The similarities in the physical characteristics of all three types of tree are pervasive enough that they are confused not only in folk terminology but also in botanical nomenclature.

> The common ash [F. excelsior] and the mountain ash [Sorbus aucuparia] may have been grouped together on the basis of a *tertium comparationis*—the flowering ash [F. ornus], which displays many properties typical of both trees. In fact, in some languages such as German the same term (*Bergesche*) may in some dialects be used for either the flowering ash or the mountain ash, or it may be used in a way that indicates that some native speakers (including the authors of some Modern German dictionaries) confuse the referent. In Classical Latin, *ornus* denoted the mountain ash, . . . but was selected by nineteenth-century botanists to designate the flowering ash (*Fraxinus ornus*), whereas at the same time the mountain ash was botanically designated by yet another term: *Sorbus aucuparia*. All this taxonomic shuffling implies that the trees are perceived as similar.[17]

Theophrastus' compound βουμελία, which apparently refers to F. excelsior,[18] confirms rather than refutes the relationship, since the specialized term is based on the generic name for all ash trees.

The importance of establishing the type or types of trees included under the term μελία is in determining the characteristics which conditioned Greek attitudes toward the group as a whole in the areas of both practical use and mythological associations. In terms of usefulness, the large F. excelsior was regarded almost everywhere

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 97.
[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.
[18] Theophrastos, *Historia Plantarum* III. 11, 4 f.; see Murr, *op. cit.*, p. 27, and Pauly-Wissowa XI (VI), coll. 617-618.

as second only to the oak in its universal utility for the husbandman in everything from fodder to implements of all types, including wheels.[19] Indeed, the wide distribution and persistence through time of the names for the ash have been attributed to "the tree's extraordinary value in primitive (and not only primitive) crafts . . . . spears . . . . bows." [20] The use of ash for weapons appears to have been particularly characteristic, and in a number of languages the derivatives of Proto-Indo-European **os-* mean both "ash" and "spear"—e.g., Old Norse *askr*, Latin *ornus*, the use of which to mean spear and Sorbus aucuparia indicates that the word may originally have applied to F. excelsior, which was used for making spears, and Latin *fraxinus*, which, having shifted from the PIE birch term, came to mean "lance" as well as F. excelsior.[21] The early Greek derivative of **os-*, **oskes*, in its classical form ὀξύα, ὀξύη means beech tree or beech spear, while φηγός, derived from the Proto-Indo-European beech term **bhagos* (e.g., *fagus*), shifts from beech to a type of oak.[22] Similarly, the Homeric epithet ὀξυ-όεις means both "made from beechwood" and "sharp, pointed, epithet of spears", and it is "presumably related either etymologically or folk etymologically to the common and standard adjective for sharp—ὀξύς." [23] Likewise the second element in the epithet δολιχ-όσκιος may be derived from the same origin.[24] The semantic shift of ὀξυ- from ash to beech may even have been motivated by its secondary meaning of "spear"; it is tempting to conjecture that its technically specialized meaning became dominant and that a subsequent change in the material used to make spears drew the term with it and led to its reapplication to the new source of material, displacing the previous term for beech, φηγός, to the Valonia oak (*Quercus aegilops*). This semantic association of φηγός and μελία, through οξύη, is an interesting one and will be mentioned later.

All of these considerations—botanical, linguistic, and utilitarian—

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[19] Rogers, *op. cit.*, pp. 441-443.

[20] Friedrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97, cites K. Moszynski, *Pierwotny zasiag jezyka praslowiańskiego*, Wroclaw, 1957; cf. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, Berlin, 1931, vol. I, pp. 190-191, and Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 441.

[21] Friedrich, *op. cit.*, p. 96; see Ovid, *Metamorphoses* V. 143.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 96.

[24] Pauly-Wissowa XI (VI), col. 617.

favor as broad a range of meaning as possible for the term μελία; in the more immediate case of the ash spear, linguistic as well as historical evidence indicates that F. excelsior furnished the wood preferred for spears. My inclination to accept a rather inclusive definition of μελία is increased by the mythological associations which the Greek conception of the ash shares with those of other cultures. The parallels are most prevalent in two areas; first there is a persistent connection between the ash and the origin of man, mortality, and mortal ancestry, and secondly the ash is frequently associated with the discovery of fire by, or its transmission to, men. These are, moreover, the two themes which most often characterize Achilles' μελίη in the narrative of the *Iliad*, so that it is of immediate importance to examine the general mythological associations of the ash tree before proceeding to the more specific context of the use of the ash spear in the *Iliad*.

A final argument concerning the botanic identity of the μελία is advanced by Murr in conjunction with the remarkably consistent "anthropogonische Bedeutung" of the ash tree in Indo-European mythology.[25] He rather curiously contends that although this striking correspondence should not be neglected, the mythological views related to the common ash (F. excelsior), especially in the Nordic sagas, should not generally be compared to those surrounding the Greek μελία, which he identifies exclusively as F. ornus. His explanation of the correspondence in this single area is that a common Indo-European belief about birth from ash trees was transferred in Greece to the variety of that tree which was most widespread there. This rationalization not only neglects other areas of correspondence, particularly that of fire; it is also self-contradictory. Even if one grants Murr's initial assumption that only F. ornus was found in ancient Greece, his explanation implies the fact, which was established above, that the two species were perceived as being very similar, and there is no reason that a similarity strong enough to effect the transfer which he posits should not have involved other mythological associations of F. excelsior as well. This final argument against any dogmatic separation of the species of ash should allow us to proceed to a more comprehensive discussion of the anthropogenic and pyrogenic functions of the ash tree in Greek mythology.

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[25] Murr, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-29.

The concept of the creation of men from trees is an old and widespread one; in some mythologies, for instance Italian, the oak is the specific tree identified with the origin of man.

> Haec nemora indigenae Fauni Nymphaeque tenebant
> gensque virum truncis et duro robore nata.
> (*Aeneid* VIII. 314-15)

The same belief appears occasionally in Greek—e.g., Penelope's reference to the old myth when she questions the disguised Odysseus about his lineage, οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ δρυός ἐσσι παλαιφάτου οὐδ' ἀπὸ πέτρης (*Odyssey* XIX. 163)[26]—but on the whole the myth in Greek centers on the ash tree and is parallelled by the first man of Nordic mythology, as mentioned above. There the name of the original man is given as "Askr", which is the Old Norse word for both "ash tree" and the spear made from its wood.[27]

The connection of these three elements, the ash tree, the ash spear, and the Urmensch, appears to be especially strong in Nordic myth because of this semantic identity, and even a cursory examination of the ash elsewhere in the mythology confirms the close association. The first men sprang from the Weltbaum Yggdrasill (or Igdrasil in its Anglicized form), and it was an ash. The branches of the World Tree support the heavens, and its roots reach down to the underworld; the fount of wisdom is at its base, where dwell the gods, the giants, and the fates.[28] Through this function as Weltbaum the ash is associated with lightning, an association to be mentioned later in conjunction with fire, and spears made from its wood seem to have taken on some of the attributes of thunderbolts.

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[26] Cf. Juvenal, *Satire* VI. 11, and Virgil, *Georgics* II. 291; see Adalbert Kuhn, *Die Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertranks*, Berlin, 1859, pp. 179-180, and Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 191; for a complete discussion of the oak's association with the origin of fire and with human procreation in Greek and Indo-European mythology and etymology, see G. Nagy, "Perkūnas and Perunŭ", *Festschrift Hermann Güntert*, forthcoming. For Kuhn's *Herabkunft* I have used the first edition exclusively, since most of the additions to the second (Gütersloh, 1886) were not made by Kuhn himself. The second edition is cross-paginated to the first for convenient reference.

[27] Murr, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29; Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25; Friedrich, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[28] Rogers, *op. cit.*, pp. 441-442; Murr, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29; Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 225 and *passim*.

> Er (Grimm) weist nämlich nach, dass man eine dem Odhin geweihte oder von ihm selber erhaltene lanze (diese war aber wie bei den Griechen meist von eschenholz, daher askr wie schlechthin gleich lanze. . . .) über die feinde schleuderte und sie mit den worten "Odhin ist euch gram" oder "Odhin hat euch alle" dem tode weihte. Das dem gotte geweihte geschoss wurde wohl. . . . dem heiligthume des gottes entnommen.[29]

In addition to the fatal nature of the ash spear, the use of consecrated weapons is an interesting parallel to Abas' shield.

Obviously, this connotation of fatality is natural for a spear, but in Greek the connotation has been explicitly formalized by the attachment of the epithet ἀνδροφόνος to μελίη.

> .. . . ἀπὸ δ' ἄμφω κέρσε τένοντε
> ἀνδροφόνος μελίη . . . .
>
> (Hesiod, *Scutum* 419-420)

> χωρὶς Πάμφυλοί τε καὶ Ὑλλεῖς ἠδ[ὲ Δυμᾶνες]
> ἀνδροφόνους μελίας χερσὶν ἀν[ασχόμενοι] . . . .
>
> (Tyrtaeus, Diehl fr. 1, 51-52)

Achilles' ash spear does not have this epithet in the *Iliad*, but there is a repeated collocation of phrases which produces much the same meaning.

> Πηλιάδα μελίην, τὴν πατρὶ φίλῳ πόρε Χείρων
> Πηλίου ἐκ κορυφῆς, φόνον ἔμμεναι ἡρώεσσιν.
>
> (*Iliad* XVI. 143-144 = XIX. 390-391)

In all three hexameter passages, the expressions ἀνδροφόνος μελίη and Πηλιάδα μελίην are localized in the same portion of the line, from the beginning to the penthemimeral caesura; obviously, given the conformation of the phrase, it fills the initial hemiepes of the pentameter as well. The one other occurrence of μελία in lyric does not have the epithet but is situated in the same position in the line.

> Οὕτω μοι, μελία τανακά, ποτὶ κίονα μακρὸν
> ἧσο πανομφαίῳ Ζανὶ μένουσ' ἱερά·
>
> (Simonides, Diehl 145, 1-2)

The ash spear's association with fatally destructive power, illustrated by its persistent connection with the word φόνος, prob-

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[29] Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226, paraphrases Grimm, *Mythologie*, p. 134; this entire edition of Kuhn is printed, as reproduced here, without capitalization of the nouns.

ably conditioned one specialized Greek variant of the myth of the origin of man from ash trees. In this version it is not the present race of men but their predecessors, the destructive and warlike bronze race, who were created from ash trees.

> Ζεὺς δὲ πατὴρ τρίτον ἄλλο γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
> χάλκειον ποίησ', οὐκ ἀργυρέῳ οὐδὲν ὁμοῖον,
> ἐκ μελιᾶν, δεινόν τε καὶ ὄβριμον· οἷσιν Ἄρηος
> ἔργ' ἔμελεν στονόεντα καὶ ὕβριες· οὐδέ τι σῖτον
> ἤσθιον, ἀλλ' ἀδάμαντος ἔχον κρατερόφρονα θυμόν,
> ἄπλαστοι· μεγάλη δὲ βίη καὶ χεῖρες ἄαπτοι
> ἐξ ὤμων ἐπέφυκον ἐπὶ στιβαροῖσι μέλεσσιν.
> τῶν δ' ἦν χάλκεα μὲν τεύχεα, χάλκεοι δέ τε οἶκοι,
> χαλκῷ δ' εἰργάζοντο· μέλας δ' οὐκ ἔσκε σίδηρος.
> καὶ τοὶ μὲν χείρεσσιν ὕπο σφετέρῃσι δαμέντες
> βῆσαν ἐς εὐρώεντα δόμον κρυεροῦ Ἀίδαο
> νώνυμνοι· θάνατος δὲ καὶ ἐκπάγλους περ ἐόντας
> εἷλε μέλας, λαμπρὸν δ' ἔλιπον φάος ἠελίοιο.
>
> (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 143-155) [30]

The bronze race is the mid-point, the third of the five races created by the gods, but the previous two were created by all the gods, the golden one in the time of Kronos (109-111) and the silver at an unspecified later time, although they were destroyed by Zeus (127-139). The bronze race is the first one created by Zeus; he subsequently produced the demigods (156-169c) and then mortal men (169d-169e). Apollonios agrees with Hesiod in designating the bronze race as the one created from ash trees, and he describes Talos as a holdover from the bronze age into the age of demigods.

> τὸν μέν, χαλκείης μελιηγενέων ἀνθρώπων
> ῥίζης λοιπὸν ἐόντα μετ' ἀνδράσιν ἡμιθέοισιν . . . .
>
> (IV. 1641-1642)

This restriction of the origin from ash trees to the bellicose bronze race, who are appropriately referred to as μερόπων ἀνθρώπων, is almost certainly a result of the ash's role as the material of spears, for both in Nordic mythology, as seen above, and elsewhere in Greek mythology, it is the race of existing men who sprang from the ash.[31] ΣT on *Iliad* XXII. 126, in a general discussion of the birth of men from rocks and trees, observes, μελιηγενεῖς λέγονται

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[30] Professor Douglas Frame has pointed out to me an interesting repetition of words based on the stem μελ- in this passage: μελιᾶν, ἔμελεν, μέλεσσιν, μέλας, μέλας.

[31] Cf. Murr, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29, and Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

οἱ πρώην ἄνδρες; likewise Palaiphatos, 35, says, τὸ πρῶτον γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκ μελιῶν γενέσθαι φασίν, and Hesychios adds, μελίας καρπός· τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος.[32] In conjunction with Homer, Clement of Alexandria quotes a fragment of Musaios which relates Glaukos' well known speech at *Iliad* VI. 145 ff. to this theme.

πάλιν τοῦ Μουσαίου ποιήσαντος·
ὡς δ' αὔτως καὶ φύλλα φύει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα·
ἄλλα μὲν ἐν μελίῃσιν ἀποφθίνει, ἄλλα δὲ φύει·
ὣς δὲ καὶ ἀνθρώπων γενεὴ καὶ φῦλον ἑλίσσει,
Ὅμηρος μεταγράφει· 'φύλλα τὰ μὲν' κτλ.
(*Stromateis* VI. 5 (II. 424, 26 Stählin)) [33]

Wilamowitz observes of this passage that "Musaios Fr. 5 setzt in das homerische Bild, das die Vergänglichkeit der Menschen mit den Blättern vergleicht, die μελίαι ein, schwerlich ohne an die Herkunft der Menschen von diesen zu denken." [34]

The belief in the anthropogenic role of ash trees was also transferred to their personifications in the ash nymphs, the Meliai; when Hesiod describes their birth, along with the Giants and the Erinyes, from Earth and the blood of the castrated Ouranos, the scholiast says at *Theogony* 187: ἐκ τούτων ἦν τὸ πρῶτον γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων.[35] The ash tree's association with war and destruction is also extended to the Meliai through their siblings, the Erinyes and the Giants.

ὅσσαι γὰρ ῥαθάμιγγες ἀπέσσυθεν αἱματόεσσαι,
πάσας δέξατο Γαῖα· περιπλομένων δ' ἐνιαυτῶν
γείνατ' Ἐρινῦς τε κρατερὰς μεγάλους τε Γίγαντας,
τεύχεσι λαμπομένους, δολίχ' ἔγχεα χερσὶν ἔχοντας
Νύμφας θ' ἃς Μελίας καλέουσ' ἐπ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν.
(*Theogony* 183-187)

The Meliai are born of an act of violence, and their brothers and sisters are the spirits of violence and retribution; this, in addition to the ash's connection with spears, has led some mythographers to interpret the Meliai as daimons of bloody deeds,[36] and that is

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[32] M. L. West on *Theogony* 183-187; Pauly-Wissowa XXIX (XV), col. 504.

[33] H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th ed., Berlin, 1951, vol. I, p. 22.

[34] Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 190, note 1.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 190; West on *Theogony* 183-187.

[36] Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 225 and p. 26; Murr, *op. cit.*, p. 29; Kuhn observes, on Atharvaveda III. 6, that the power of the açvattha-shoot (a possible cognate of "ash", from *osk-), which grows into a khadira tree, derives from lightning and the thunderbolt, which are metamorphosed into the açvattha. There is also a persistent connection between lightning and the ash spear, which will be discussed later in conjunction with the ash's association with fire.

certainly one of their mythological connotations, as mortality and destruction are one facet of the ash tree's associations. The connection with the Erinyes is a persistent one; in the underworld, the Erinyes are depicted carrying staffs of ash-wood, and Nemesis likewise appears with a branch of ash in her hand.[37] Clearly, both the tree and the nymphs named after it were commonly associated with vengeance and violent retribution.

This sinister aspect is, however, only one side of the Meliai; they also appear as nurturing deities when they receive the infant Zeus from the nymph Neda shortly after Rheia has given birth.

> Ζεῦ, σὲ δὲ Κυρβάντων ἑτάραι προσεπηχύναντο
> Δικταῖαι Μελίαι, σὲ δ' ἐκοίμισεν 'Αδρήστεια
> λίκνῳ ἐνὶ χρυσέῳ, σὺ δ' ἐθήσαο πίονα μαζὸν
> αἰγὸς 'Αμαλθείης, ἐπὶ δὲ γλυκὺ κηρίον ἔβρως.
> γέντο γὰρ ἐξαπιναῖα Παναχρίδος ἔργα μελίσσης
> 'Ιδαίοις ἐν ὄρεσσι, τά τε κλείουσι Πάνακρα.
> οὖλα δὲ Κούρητές σε περὶ πρύλιν ὠρχήσαντο
> τεύχεα πεπλήγοντες, ἵνα Κρόνος οὔασιν ἠχὴν
> ἀσπίδος εἰσαΐοι καὶ μή σεο κουρίζοντος.
>
> (Kallimachos, *Hymn to Zeus*, 45-53)

It should first be noted that even in this benevolent function the ash nymphs maintain their association with Adrasteia, the proper name (or perhaps epithet) of Nemesis. The connection with the Korybantes and Kuretes seems to have cult connotations,[38] but by far the most interesting associations in this context are those with Amaltheia and with the birth of the Idaean bees, both of which emphasize the theme of nurturing fertility in this passage and the connection of the Meliai with it.

There is a persistent association between ash trees and the Meliai, on the one hand, and bees and honey on the other, reinforced by the common first syllable of their respective names (μελ-), and it should at least be mentioned parenthetically in conjunction with this passage. The confusion over whether the nurses of Zeus were the Meliai or the Melissai, or both,[39] typifies the popular identification of the two, and the juxtaposition of Amaltheia, so much a

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[37] Murr, *op. cit.*, p. 30; J. H. Dierbach, *Flora Mythologica*, Frankfurt, 1833, pp. 36-37; Angelo de Gubernatis, *La Mythologie des Plantes*, Paris, 1878, vol. II, p. 149, where de Gubernatis also mentions sinister connotations of the ash in other mythologies. Dierbach cites Chartarius, *Deorum historia*, p. 127.

[38] Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

[39] Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-137.

figure of fertility that her horn was later considered both a source of nektar and ambrosia (see the scholiast on line 49 of the above passage) and, when broken off, the origin of the proverbial Ἀμαλθείας κέρας, the Greek equivalent of the *cornu Copiae* (Ovid, *Fasti* V. 111-128),[40] emphasizes the shared function which caused the confusion between ash nymphs and bees. As a first example, related to the infancy of Zeus, in parts of Scotland newborn children are given the juice from a heated twig of ash as their first food, replacing honey which is more widely used,[41] and in Britain and the United States, ashes which are rotted black at the core by fungus are considered to have harder and better wood than normal trees, and they are called "bee-sucken" ash because bees are believed to be responsible for the condition.[42]

The basis of this association between the ash tree and honey appears to have been manna, the medicinal wax which F. ornus exudes from its trunk and leaves;[43] the *açvattha* tree of Indian paradise, which sweats the ambrosial *madhu*, and the Scandinavian World-Ash Yggdrasill, which waters the world with honeydew, both clearly share this function with the ash.[44] Among the Greeks and Romans, this dew was believed to have fallen from heaven, like the honey dropped by the World-Ash, and to be collected rather than produced by bees.

> αἱ τοῦ μέλιτος γενέσεις τριτταί, ἡ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθῶν καὶ ἐν οἷς ἄλλοις ἐστὶν ἡ γλυκύτης, ἄλλη δ' ἐκ τοῦ ἀέρος, ὅταν ἀναχυθὲν ὑγρὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου συνεψηθὲν πέσῃ. Γίνεται δὲ τοῦτο μάλιστα ὑπὸ πυραμητόν. ἄλλη δ' ἐν τοῖς καλάμοις.
>
> (Theophrastos, fr. 190, Wimmer)
>
> Quibusdam placet non faciendi mellis scientiam apibus esse sed colligendi.
>
> (Seneca, *Epistula* 84)

This belief seems to have been quite widespread; the honeydew was called δροσόμελι, ἀερόμελι, or ὗον μέλι.[45] As an apparent conse-

[40] *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 41, also cites Antiphanes on Athenaios 503b.

[41] Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-230 and 257, quotes F. Magnusen, *Lexicon mythologicum*, p. 597, and "Sylvan Sketches", *Literary Gazette*, London, 1825.

[42] Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 440-441.

[44] de Gubernatis, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 148; Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

[45] W. H. Roscher, *Nektar und Ambrosia*, Leipzig, 1883, pp. 13-22, gives an extensive discussion of heaven-produced honey with numerous citations of Greek and Latin sources, of which the two here are a rather arbitrary sampling. Cf. Murr, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31, and Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

quence of this belief in the heavenly origin of honey, there was a natural association of honey with nektar and ambrosia, as the food of the gods.[46] Having fallen from heaven, the dew was believed to collect on trees, and here the connection with the ash is rather weak, for the plants most frequently mentioned are the oak, the linden, and certain types of reed.[47] Certainly there is no mention of manna as a separate substance in Greek; if it does appear, it is designated as μέλι or as one of the compounds listed above.[48] But whether or not manna was regarded as a separate substance, Hesychios confirms the role of the ash as a source of honey and its association with bees: μελίη ὥσπερ μέλι. εἶδος δένδρου, ὅθεν τὰ μέλιτα, and similarly μελίαι. μέλισσαι. ἢ δόρατα ἢ λόγχαι.[49] These citations again raise the question of the etymological identification of the words μέλι, μελία, and μέλισσα; the difficulty lies in what one considers to be the root of the word μέλι. If the stem is μελιτ- (= Goth. miliþ), then the two cannot be cognate, since the addition of a suffix in -ια would produce μέλιττα or μέλισσα as a derivative,[50] but if the stem is μελι- (Lat. mel), then μελιτ-/milit is itself a result of suffixation, and μέλι, μελία, and μέλισσα are cognate in reality as well as in the popular mind. This view has found favor among some contemporary linguists,[51] and I tend to prefer it, since it offers a possible explanation of the associations which led to the application of the word μελία to the ash tree, with the accompanying displacement—whether causative or resultant—of the Proto-Indo-European ash-term **osk-*/ὀξυ- to the beech tree.[52]

Whether μέλι and μελία are identified as true cognates or their identity is the result of folk etymology, the association between ash trees, bees, and honey remains a significant one in Greek myth. This association not only emphasizes the ash nymphs'

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46 Roscher, *Nektar und Ambrosia, loc. cit.*, and Murr, *loc. cit.*

47 Roscher, *Nektar und Ambrosia*, pp. 15-16; esp. p. 15, note 24.

48 Pauly-Wissowa, XI (VI), col. 617.

49 Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

50 *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136; cf. Pauly-Wissowa, XI (VI), coll. 617-618, which cites W. Preller (*Etymologisches Wörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*, 1892), who would derive μελία from σμελϜια, connected with Lith. *smelus*= ashen, ash-gray. This association between ash (*cinis*) and ash (*fraxinus*) occurs also in English and German and may simply be a result of their similar colors.

51 J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Bern, 1959, vol. I, pp. 723-724.

52 See my discussion of this semantic shift on page 43 above, with reference to Friedrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

aspect of benevolent fertility, which balances their more sinister relationships to the Giants, Erinyes, and Nemesis; it also serves as a link to the role of the Meliai as mothers and nourishers, both of gods and of men, and it supplies a further parallel to the rather enigmatic Yggdrasill, the anthropogenic World Ash which furnishes nourishment to men, gods, and the earth.

That ash trees, and by extension the Meliai, appear collectively as the source of mortals, be they men or the bronze race, is somewhat surprising; that an individual nymph Melia is the mother of a prolific variety of men and demigods, including a centaur, is much less so. As an individual, Melia is usually believed to be a daughter of Okeanos (e.g., Hesychios: μελία· δένδρου εἶδος ἀπὸ μελίας Ὠκεανοῦ),[53] and in this capacity she appears as the mother of Phoroneus by Inachos (Tzetzes, *ad Lycophronem* 177; Apollodoros, *Bibliotheke* II. 1, 1), the mother of the centaur Pholos by Silenos (Apollodoros II. 5, 4), of Ismenos and Teneros by Apollo (Pausanias IX. 10, 5-6; cf. Herodotos I. 52), and of Amykos by Poseidon (Apollonios II. 4); [54] she also appears as a mortal of no particular consequence.[55] The relationship with Pholos is interesting, since the source of Achilles' μελίη is also a centaur, Cheiron, and Pholos and Cheiron, along with some other, minor centaurs, are killed at the same time by Herakles at Malea (Apollodoros, *Bibliotheke* II. 83-87).[56] In Theban myth, Melia is repeatedly connected with prophecy through her sons Teneros and Ismenos and her consort Apollo (Pindar, *Pythian* XI. 1-7; fragments 52g, 4 and 52k, 35-43, Snell; cf. fragment 29, 1).

The aspect of Melia, however, which relates most closely to the discussion of the ash tree's association with mortality and the origin of man, is her role as the mother of Phoroneus, for in Argive local myth Phoroneus is the first man and the father of the race (Apollodoros, *Bibliotheke* II. 1).[57] In the same context, Phoroneus' siblings, likewise the children of Melia, are Mykene, Phegeus, and Aigialeus,[58]

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[53] Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

[54] Murr, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30; Pauly-Wissowa, XXIX (XV), coll. 505-506.

[55] Murr, *loc. cit.*

[56] Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 396; this association between the ash tree and centaurs might well prove to be a fertile digression here, were not the centaurs themselves so complicated a topic.

[57] *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 190; Murr, *op. cit.*, p. 29; Pauly-Wissowa, vol. XXIX (XV), col. 505.

[58] Pauly-Wissowa, *loc. cit.*, cites in addition schol. *Il.* I. 22; schol. Eur. *Orest.* 920, 1239; Tzetz. *ad Lykophron.* 177; schol. *Odyss.* II. 120; *F. Gr. Hist.* I. 53, 380.

all of whom share aspects of Phoroneus' function as the father of mankind. Mykene is clearly the eponymous predecessor of an early settlement in the Argolid, and Aigialeus has a similar function for the same region. His name, as the common noun αἰγιαλεύς, means literally "frequenting the shore", but as a proper noun, in the plural, it refers generically to the inhabitants of the north coast of the Peloponnese (Herodotos V. 68; VII. 94; see *LSJ* s.v.) or to the Argives (Theokritos 25. 174). In addition, Aigialeus appears as an early eponymous hero of the whole Peloponnesos, which was first named for him and later for Apis, the son of Phoroneus.

> ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι ἡ Πελοπόννησος τὸ ἀρχαῖον Αἰγιάλεια ἐκαλεῖτο, ἀπὸ Αἰγιαλέως τοῦ υἱοῦ Ἰνάχου τοῦ ἐν Ἄργει ποταμοῦ καὶ Μελίας τῆς Ὠκεανοῦ. ὕστερον δὲ Ἀπία πάλιν ἐκλήθη, ἀπὸ Ἄπιδος τοῦ Φορωνέως παιδός· (ΣA to *Iliad* I. 22)

The theme of Melia's offspring as the progenitors of the human race, or of a part of it, is continued in a rather different way with Phegeus; his name, derived from φηγός, the Valonia oak, identifies him as another of the treeborn first men. His name also confirms the connection between the μελία and the φηγός, first seen in the catalogue of trees in a simile, φηγόν τε μελίην τε τανύφλοιόν τε κράνειαν (*Iliad* XVI. 767), and later discussed in conjunction with the semantic relationship between μελία and φηγός through ὀξύα.[59] That the three trees in question—the ash, the beech, and the Valonia oak—were perceived as similar seems impossible, but they were clearly associated, perhaps because of a similarity in function, as suggested above.

The ash tree, the Meliai collectively, and the individual Okeanid Melia all share a clear anthropogenic role and, through it, an association with mortality and mortal ancestry. Melia's son Phoroneus, the Argive *Urmensch*, furnishes a link to the second major aspect of the ash tree in Greek mythology, its association with the origin of fire or its transmission to men, for in Peloponnesian myth he, rather than Prometheus, was believed to be the one who had brought fire to men.

> ἑξῆς δὲ τῆς εἰκόνος ταύτης πῦρ καίουσιν, ὀνομάζοντες Φορωνέως εἶναι· οὐ γάρ τοι ὁμολογοῦσι δοῦναι πῦρ Προμηθέα ἀνθρώποις, ἀλλὰ ἐς Φορωνέα τοῦ πυρὸς μετάγειν ἐθέλουσι τὴν εὕρεσιν.
> (Pausanias II. 19, 5)[60]

[59] See page 43 above, referring to Friedrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.
[60] Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

Phoroneus' dual role is parallelled in Vedic mythology, where the old Indic race ancestors Angiras, Bhṛgu, and Atharvan are representatives of different incarnations of Agni, the god of fire, and this is confirmed by a further, linguistic parallel between the two. A frequent epithet of the Indic fire-god Agni is bhuraṇyu, derived from the root bhar (bhṛ), with a zero-grade ablaut in the stem (an analogous ablaut to *u* can be seen in the forms bhuramana, Rig Veda I. 119, 4; bhuraṇa, R. V. I. 117, 11; X. 29, 1). The root bhar is cognate with φέρω and has the same basic meaning, and the name Φορωνεύς is parallel to Agni's epithet bhuraṇyu in all respects, with the exception of the ablaut, which is zero-grade in Sanskrit and *o*-grade in Greek; however, the divergence in ablaut before -ṛəV is a common difference between Indo-Iranian and the western Indo-European families.[61] It is quite possible that an epithet of agent, originally applied to a god who was considered the "bearer" of fire to men, lost its identity as an epithet and was subsequently applied to a demigod or hero who possessed or acquired the characteristic function associated with the newly independent name.[62]

One possible explanation of Melia's relationship to a fire-bringer can be reached through the Nordic World Ash; if the ash is considered the *Weltbaum*, the branches of which support the heavens, then it is also a *Wetterbaum*, and it is natural to believe that the offspring of the ash are lightning bolts or the daimons who control them.[63] This direct interpretation seems, however, much less appropriate to the subtler structure of myths surrounding Melia, although there is one Theban myth which at least suggests a similar relationship between Melia and a creator of lightning.

> Μελίας δὲ ἀδελφὸν καὶ Ὠκεανοῦ παῖδα Κάανθον λέγουσι, σταλῆναι δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ζητήσοντα ἡρπασμένην τὴν ἀδελφήν· ὡς δὲ

[61] I am indebted to Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-28, for the outline of this entire linguistic argument; see his discussion for a more extensive, and convincing, analysis of the elements involved. See also J. Kuryłowicz, *L'Apophonie en Indo-européen*, Wroclaw, 1956, pp. 244-246.

[62] For a complete discussion of parallel evolution from divine epithet to hero's name in the Mahâbhârata, see G. Dumézil, *Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus*, Paris, 1941-, vol. IV, chapter 2, pp. 37-53.

[63] Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-28 and 132-135; Kuhn here advances his theory that the sea in Indo-European myth is actually the sky of a landlocked people and that the ash in Greek myth is a sky and cloud divinity. This is a complex idea and need not concern us here; further arguments by Kuhn can be found in his *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung*, I, p. 536.

'Απόλλωνα εὑρὼν ἔχοντα τὴν Μελίαν οὐκ ἐδύνατο ἀφελέσθαι, πῦρ ἐτόλμησεν ἐς τὸ τέμενος ἐνεῖναι τοῦ 'Απόλλωνος τοῦτο ὃ νῦν καλοῦσιν 'Ισμήνιον, καὶ αὐτὸν ὁ θεός, καθά φασιν οἱ Θηβαῖοι, τοξεύει.

(Pausanias IX. 10, 5)

It was from this forced union with Apollo that Melia bore Teneros and Ismenios. Melia's brother Κά(Ϝ)ανθος also finds a parallel in the Indic figure Kavandha or Kabandha, which means literally "barrel", a convex container; Kavandha, a cloud daimon, in an attempt to recover a sister stolen by Indra, threw fire at her abductor and was killed by him.[64] In both cases, it seems clear that the fire thrown at the offending divinity is lightning.

There are further, more tenuous connections between the ash tree and lightning,[65] but fortunately the more immediate role of the ash as the original source of fire is confirmed by Hesiod. In the *Theogony*, Zeus, angry at having been deceived by Prometheus in the apportionment of the banquet, witholds fire from mortals.

ὣς φάτο χωόμενος Ζεὺς ἄφθιτα μήδεα εἰδώς.
ἐκ τούτου δήπειτα χόλου μεμνημένος αἰεὶ
οὐκ ἐδίδου μελίῃσι πυρὸς μένος ἀκαμάτοιο
θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις οἳ ἐπὶ χθονὶ ναιετάουσιν·
ἀλλά μιν ἐξαπάτησεν ἐὺς πάις 'Ιαπετοῖο
κλέψας ἀκαμάτοιο πυρὸς τηλέσκοπον αὐγὴν
ἐν κοίλῳ νάρθηκι· . . . .

(*Theogony* 561-567)

Wilamowitz, with the scholiast, would interpret μελίῃσι here to mean "men", in apposition with θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις in the next line,[66] the whole of which could, in that case, be interpreted as a gloss on μελίῃσι. Melia's role as mother of the Argive fire-bringer Phoroneus, however, argues in favor of interpreting μελίῃσι in its usual sense of "ash trees", as West does, particularly since μελίῃσι seems a rather drastic periphrasis for "men". There is, in addition, the

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[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 133-135.

[65] See *ibid.*, pp. 225-226 and 230-231, in conjunction with my discussion of the destructive power of the ash spear and its connection with the thunderbolt. There is the additional association that the European ash is believed to attract lightning. Among other things, Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 442, quotes this rustic warning.

"Beware the oak, it draws the stroke;
Avoid the ash, it courts the flash;
Creep under the thorn—it will save you from harm."

[66] Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

consideration that the most usual primitive method of obtaining fire is from wood by friction, so that fire is frequently believed to reside somehow in wood. It is consequently natural to consider trees as the source of fire, and "many of the myths of the origin of fire attempt to explain how the igneous element came to be thus deposited in trees." [67] This idea is also an interesting adjunct to Prometheus' use of a hollow reed as a receptacle for the fire. Anaxagoras' use of fire as an example for his principle that there is an element of all things in everything is probably derived from a more sophisticated version of the same conception of the origin of fire. "In lignis si flamma latet fumusque cinisque . . . ." (Lucretius I. 871).[68]

There is a final, oblique connection between the ash tree and fire which should at least be mentioned parenthetically here. The ash is frequently credited with an almost magical power against snakes and other poisonous animals.

> οὐκ ἔχις οὐδὲ φάλαγγες ἀπεχθέες οὐδὲ βαθυπλὴξ
> ἄλσεσιν ἐν ζώοις σκορπίος ἐν Κλαρίοις.
> Φοῖβος ἐπεί ῥ' αὐλῶνα βαθὺν μελίαισι καλύψας
> ποιηρὸν δάπεδον θῆκεν ἑκὰς δακέτων.
>
> (Nicander, fragment 31) [69]

Among the Romans, at least, this power extended to a medicinal value against snakebite, and the ash's efficacy against snakes is believed to exceed even that of fire.

> Contra serpentes vero, succo expresso ad potum, et imposita ulceribus, opifera (fraxinus), ac nihil aeque reperitur. Tantaque est vis, ut ne matutinas quidem occidentesve umbras, quamvis sint longissimae, serpens arboris eius attingat, adeo ipsam procul fugat. Experta prodimus; si fronde ea gyro claudatur ignis et serpens, in ignem potius quam in fraxinum fugere serpentem.
>
> (Pliny, *Historia naturalis* XVI. 13) [70]

The ash tree, to judge from these sources, had two principal associations in Greek mythology, one with the origin of man and the other with the origin of fire, and two minor ones, each of which

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[67] West on *Theogony* 563 cites J. G. Frazer, *Myths of the Origin of Fire*, p. 223, in addition to pp. 26, 28, 57, 58, 77, 79, 130, 155, 171, 183.

[68] West, *loc. cit.*

[69] Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-230.

[70] de Gubernatis, *op. cit.*, p. 148; cf. Rogers, *op. cit.*, pp. 439 and 442, and Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 229, for further examples.

is connected with one of the major associations—bees and honey in connection with the creation of man, and power against serpents, apparently in connection with its role as the source of fire. The sources for these associations are in some cases disturbingly diverse in time and place of origin, but fortunately Hesiod confirms the basis of both principal points, so that although some of the later details may be considered elaborations or variations, the repetition of the essential elements indicates at the very least a continuing awareness of the basic material found in Hesiod and a consequent corroboration of it. This approach is of course necessitated by the relative rarity of references to the ash, either as a tree or as a spear, and the obvious importance attached to the ash in the *Iliad*, as indicated by the relatively frequent occurrence of μελίη, μείλινος, and ἐϋμμελίης, makes it a natural work in which to pursue the Greek conception of the ash's anthropogenic and pyrogenic roles, in addition to attempting to establish the thematic integration of the ash within the narrative of the *Iliad*, in the form of Achilles' ash spear.

Before proceeding to examine the role of ash spears in the *Iliad*, however, it is appropriate to mention the two similes again in which the ash appears as a tree. In a battle narrative, it is natural that similes should concern violence, so that perhaps it is gratuitous to recall the associations which the ash has with mortal ancestry and mortality, and with war and fatal destruction through the spear (ἀνδρόφονος μελίη), the bronze race, the Giants, and the Erinyes, in this context. Both similes nonetheless describe scenes of violence and death; in the first Teucer kills Imbrios, the husband of Priam's bastard daughter Medesikaste.

τόν ῥ' υἱὸς Τελαμῶνος ὑπ' οὔατος ἔγχεϊ μακρῷ
νύξ', ἐκ δ' ἔσπασεν ἔγχος· ὁ δ' αὖτ' ἔπεσεν μελίη ὥς,
ἥ τ' ὄρεος κορυφῇ ἕκαθεν περιφαινομένοιο
χαλκῷ ταμνομένη τέρενα χθονὶ φύλλα πελάσσῃ·

(XIII. 177-180)

The simile is straightforward, and there is nothing in the adjacent narrative to suggest that it should be interpreted to have any meaning other than the explicit comparison between a dying hero and a felled tree. The second simile describes the fight of the Greeks, led by Patroklos, and the Trojans, led by Hektor, over the body of Kebriones.

Ὡς δ' Εὖρός τε Νότος τ' ἐριδαίνετον ἀλλήλοιιν
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσῃς βαθέην πελεμιζέμεν ὕλην
φηγόν τε μελίην τε τανύφλοιόν τε κράνειαν,
αἵ τε πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἔβαλον τανυήκεας ὄζους
ἠχῇ θεσπεσίῃ, πάταγος δέ τε ἀγνυμενάων,
ὣς Τρῶες καὶ Ἀχαιοὶ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι θορόντες
δῄουν, οὐδ' ἕτεροι μνώοντ' ὀλοοῖο φόβοιο.

(XVI. 765-771)

The description of destructive violence is clear; in addition, this simile contains the list of trees which juxtaposes the ash and the Valonia oak (φηγός), discussed above in conjunction with the semantic connection between μελία and φηγός through ὀξύη, which, derived from the Proto-Indo-European term for ash, shifted to the beech and was replaced by μελία, with a concomitant shift of φηγός, the derivative of the old term for beech, to the Valonia oak. The same connection, together with the suggestion of an attitude which may have conditioned the shifts, was discussed in relation to Φηγεύς as the son of Μελία.[71] This simile also precedes the death of Patroklos (XVI. 783-863) almost immediately, and there Euphorbos, the first mortal to wound Patroklos, uses an ash spear (δόρυ μείλινον, 814). The connection is perhaps tenuous, but it will be mentioned again in conjunction with Patroklos' death.

The two references to ash trees in the *Iliad* do not appear to be productive, but the great majority of the occurrences of μελίη mean "ash spear" in the *Iliad*, just as all the uses of the adjective μείλινος refer to spears, and ἐυμμελίης has no apparent meaning other than "armed with good ashen spear" (LSJ). Attention can consequently now be focused on the ash spear. The word μελίη occurs with this meaning only once in the *Iliad* before the arming of Patroklos, after which it always refers to Achilles' spear, and that appearance in the catalogue with the Abantes (II. 543) has already been discussed; both μείλινος and ἐϋμμελίης, however, occur a number of times before Patroklos' arming and are used in conjunction with other characters than Achilles, and it should prove a worthwhile preliminary to examine how these references to ash spears in the initial books of the *Iliad* conform to my previous evaluation of the connotations of the ash.

To begin with the adjective μείλινος, it is always neuter in the *Iliad*, modifying either δόρυ or ἔγχος, and in this section (I. 1-XVI.

[71] See page 43 and 53 above.

130), before Patroklos arms, it is always accusative and also always singular. The single exception to this is an accusative plural (μείλινα δοῦρα) in a negative description of the armament of the Lokrian peltasts, explaining why they do not follow and support Aias Oiliades in hand-to-hand combat in the same way that Telamonian Aias' troops support him.

οὐδ' ἄρ' Ὀϊλιάδῃ μεγαλήτορι Λοκροὶ ἕποντο·
οὐ γάρ σφι σταδίῃ ὑσμίνῃ μίμνε φίλον κῆρ·
οὐ γὰρ ἔχον κόρυθας χαλκήρεας ἱπποδασείας
οὐδ' ἔχον ἀσπίδας εὐκύκλους καὶ μείλινα δοῦρα,
ἀλλ' ἄρα τόξοισιν καὶ ἐϋστρεφεῖ οἶος ἀώτῳ
Ἴλιον εἰς ἅμ' ἕποντο πεποιθότες . . . . .

(XII. 711-717)

The obvious absence of Achilles and his ash spear from this preliminary battle around the ships can contribute little to the interpretation of what is essentially a negative, general statement about armaments in the form of a list. The Lokrians' lack of ash spears here does not even imply weakness, for their bows and slings are instrumental in the Greeks' temporary success against the Trojans (717-724), so that the adjective appears to be entirely neutral here.

The other occurrences of μείλινον in this section of the *Iliad* are more consistent among themselves and offer more direct comparisons with aspects of the ash tree and Achilles' ash spear. Three of the six other occurrences appear in a single scene, the battle between Tlepolemos and Sarpedon (V. 627-698). Their similar ancestry is mentioned at the beginning of the confrontation; Sarpedon is of course the son of Zeus, and Tlepolemos is the son of Herakles and consequently the grandson of Zeus.

οἱ δ' ὅτε δὴ σχεδὸν ἦσαν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἰόντες
υἱός θ' υἱωνός τε Διὸς νεφεληγερέταο, ...

(V. 630-631)

Tlepolemos expands on the relationship in a speech which accuses Sarpedon of not being the true son of Zeus and cites Tlepolemos' own father Herakles as a true example of Zeus' progeny, for he sacked Troy with only six ships in order to retrieve the horses stolen by Laomedon (V. 633-646). Sarpedon replies laconically, blaming Laomedon's folly for the earlier sack and threatening Tlepolemos' death (V. 648-654). As the fight begins, Tlepolemos wields an ash spear.

Ὣς φάτο Σαρπηδών, ὁ δ' ἀνέσχετο μείλινον ἔγχος
Τληπόλεμος . . . . .

(V. 655-656)

Tlepolemos and Sarpedon cast their spears simultaneously; Tlepolemos is struck in the throat and killed, while Sarpedon, badly wounded in the thigh, is carried from the battle by his followers.

ἐξέφερον πολέμοιο· βάρυνε δέ μιν δόρυ μακρὸν
ἑλκόμενον· τὸ μὲν οὔ τις ἐπεφράσατ' οὐδ' ἐνόησε,
μηροῦ ἐξερύσαι δόρυ μείλινον, ὄφρ' ἐπιβαίη, ...

(V. 664-666)

After an interlude in which Odysseus attacks the Lykians and Sarpedon appeals to Hektor for help (V. 668-691), Sarpedon's followers succeed in getting him to safety, and Pelagon removes Tlepolemos' ash spear from Sarpedon's thigh.

οἱ μὲν ἄρ' ἀντίθεον Σαρπηδόνα δῖοι ἑταῖροι
εἷσαν ὑπ' αἰγιόχοιο Διὸς περικαλλέϊ φηγῷ·
ἐκ δ' ἄρα οἱ μηροῦ δόρυ μείλινον ὦσε θύραζε
ἴφθιμος Πελάγων, ὅς οἱ φίλος ἦεν ἑταῖρος.

(V. 692-695)

First, there is another repetition here of the juxtaposition of the Valonia oak and the ash; the persistence of this association is rather impressive. The emphasis in this scene is on the comparative genealogy of the two combatants, and although both are the direct descendants of Zeus, the battle demonstrates their basic mortality; Tlepolemos dies, and Sarpedon narrowly escapes death (V. 696-698). This is the first point in the *Iliad* at which the ash spear is connected with the themes of descent and mortality.

Descriptions, similar to the one in this scene, of the extraction of an ash spear from a dead or wounded warrior recur in two of the other three appearances of μείλινον which precede the arming of Patroklos. In the first of them, Agamemnon, having convinced Menelaos not to accept the supplication of Adrestos, stabs the suppliant with his spear as Menelaos pushes him away. Agamemnon then pulls his ash spear out of the dying man.

. . . . ὁ [Μενέλαος] δ' ἀπὸ ἕθεν ὤσατο χειρὶ
ἥρω' Ἄδρηστον· τὸν δὲ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων
οὖτα κατὰ λαπάρην· ὁ δ' ἀνετράπετ', Ἀτρεΐδης δὲ
λὰξ ἐν στήθεσι βὰς ἐξέσπασε μείλινον ἔγχος.

(VI. 62-65)

In the second, Helenos, wounded in his bow hand by Menelaos' spear, retires to his own lines dragging the ash spear, which Agenor removes from his hand.

> ἂψ δ' ἑτάρων εἰς ἔθνος ἐχάζετο κῆρ' ἀλεείνων
> χεῖρα παρακρεμάσας· τὸ δ' ἐφέλκετο μείλινον ἔγχος.
> καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐκ χειρὸς ἔρυσεν μεγάθυμος Ἀγήνωρ,
> αὐτὴν δὲ ξυνέδησεν ἐϋστρεφεῖ οἰὸς ἀώτῳ,
> σφενδόνῃ, ...
>
> (XIII. 596-600)

Despite the predictable similarities in vocabulary in the words for dragging and extracting,[72] there are no verbally or formulaically identical expressions in any of the three passages other than those for the ash spears, so that the association appears to have been a conceptual rather than a formulaic one. Five of the seven occurrences of μείλινον or μείλινα in this part of the *Iliad*, in three of the five scenes concerning an ash spear, involve the dragging and/or extraction of the spear, with the emphasis on the extraction. The reason for this pronounced association of ideas even in scenes where it has no apparent importance to the narrative, as in those involving Agamemnon and Helenos, will become clear in the later scenes in which Achilles is associated with ash spears, for there the retrieval of a previously cast ash spear assumes central importance.

The single remaining occurrence of μείλινον in this section falls immediately before the arming of Patroklos, and the ash spear is directly involved in the immediate cause of Achilles' assent that Patroklos arm and enter battle with the Myrmidons. In response to Patroklos' plea (XVI. 21-45), Achilles has already agreed to allow him to lead the Myrmidons into the battle by the ships wearing Achilles' own armor and has outlined the restrictions on Patroklos' participation (49-100), but at that point the narrative

[72] The last line of this passage (XIII. 599) also contains an odd formulaic parallel to the passage describing the armament of the Lokrians; there ἐϋστρεφεῖ οἷος ἀώτῳ (XIII. 716; the accent on οἷος here is an obvious typographical error; both Leaf and Mazon print οἰός, and Allen makes no mention of the discrepancy in his apparatus. οἷος would, of course, be meaningless here.) is interpreted as a periphrasis for "sling", while here (XIII. 599) ἐϋστρεφεῖ οἰὸς ἀώτῳ is in apparent apposition with σφενδόνῃ at the beginning of the next line. The relative proximity of the two passages may have made the suppression of the appositive in the second passage possible and may also be reponsible for the repeated connection with an ash spear; I can offer no other explanation.

shifts to Aias, the last of the Greek champions to remain unwounded, who is hard-pressed in his defence of the ships (102-111). The decapitation of Aias' ash spear and the consequent firing of the Greek ships directly cause Achilles' enactment of his previous decisions.

Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι, Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι,
ὅππως δὴ πρῶτον πῦρ ἔμπεσε νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν.
Ἕκτωρ Αἴαντος δόρυ μείλινον ἄγχι παραστὰς
πλῆξ' ἄορι μεγάλῳ, αἰχμῆς παρὰ καυλὸν ὄπισθεν,
ἀντικρὺ δ' ἀπάραξε· τὸ μὲν Τελαμώνιος Αἴας
πῆλ' αὔτως ἐν χειρὶ κόλον δόρυ, τῆλε δ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ
αἰχμὴ χαλκείη χαμάδις βόμβησε πεσοῦσα.
γνῶ δ' Αἴας κατὰ θυμὸν ἀμύμονα, ῥίγησέν τε,
ἔργα θεῶν, ὅ ῥα πάγχυ μάχης ἐπὶ μήδεα κεῖρε
Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης, Τρώεσσι δὲ βούλετο νίκην·
χάζετο δ' ἐκ βελέων. τοὶ δ' ἔμβαλον ἀκάματον πῦρ
νηΐ θοῇ· τῆς δ' αἶψα κατ' ἀσβέστη κέχυτο φλόξ.
ὣς τὴν μὲν πρύμνην πῦρ ἄμφεπεν· αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς
μηρὼ πληξάμενος Πατροκλῆα προσέειπεν·
"ὄρσεο, διογενὲς Πατρόκλεες, ἱπποκέλευθε·
λεύσσω δὴ παρὰ νηυσὶ πυρὸς δηΐοιο ἰωήν·
μὴ δὴ νῆας ἕλωσι καὶ οὐκέτι φυκτὰ πέλωνται·
δύσεο τεύχεα θᾶσσον, ἐγὼ δέ κε λαὸν ἀγείρω."
(XVI. 112-129)

Immediately following Achilles' speech, Patroklos begins to arm himself (130 ff.). In this passage, the ash spear is directly associated with fire for the first time in the *Iliad*; Hektor's disarming of Aias is bracketed by the poet's request to know how fire first fell on the ships and the Trojans' performance of the act, and the destruction of the ash spear is the direct cause of the fire. Through the loss of his spear, Aias recognizes for the first time the will of Zeus and abandons his vain defence of the ships, so that there, also for the first time in the *Iliad*, the ash spear plays a decisive role at a critical point in the narrative. The importance of both these functions—association with fire and decisive prominence in crucial situations—should become clearer with a thorough examination of the role of the ash spear in the narrative of the events which follow, and in part result from, the firing of the ships in this scene.

Before proceeding to that examination, however, it seems appropriate to insert a few comments on the use of the adjective ἐϋμμελίης in the *Iliad*. In the portion which I have been discussing, before XVI. 130, all three occurrences of ἐϋμμελίης apply to Priam

and appear in a repeated line (IV. 47 = IV. 165 = VI. 449), and in two of the passages, in a series of two repeated lines (IV. 164-165 = VI. 448-449). The consistency of the use of ἐϋμμελίω Πριάμοιο, however, extends beyond its formulaic application, for in all three passages the repeated lines appear in speeches, and in each case the speech foretells the destruction of Troy. In the first of them, Zeus yields unwillingly to Hera's desire to destroy Troy but protests by threatening her favorite cities and reviewing his own affection for Troy.

> "αἳ γὰρ ὑπ' ἠελίῳ τε καὶ οὐρανῷ ἀστερόεντι
> ναιετάουσι πόληες ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων,
> τάων μοι περὶ κῆρι τιέσκετο Ἴλιος ἱρὴ
> καὶ Πρίαμος καὶ λαὸς ἐϋμμελίω Πριάμοιο."
>
> (IV. 44-47)

The remaining two passages are more uniform in content if not in tone; in one, Agamemnon, angered by the wounding of Menelaos in violation of the oaths taken for the single combat, vengefully predicts Troy's fall, and in the other, Hektor regretfully foretells the fates of Troy and his family in his conversation with Andromache at the Skaian gate. Both of the predictions are preceded by single-line expressions of absolute certainty.

> "εὖ γὰρ ἐγὼ τόδε οἶδα κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν·
> ἔσσεται ἦμαρ ὅτ' ἄν ποτ' ὀλώλῃ Ἴλιος ἱρὴ
> καὶ Πρίαμος καὶ λαὸς ἐϋμμελίω Πριάμοιο, ..."
>
> (IV. 163-165 = VI. 447-449)

The use of this convenient full-line formula only in the context of the ultimate inevitability of the destruction of Troy indicates an association between Troy's fate and Priam's epithet, which is the only word in the line not necessary to its sense and which could conceivably be replaced by an epithet found once with Priam's name in the genitive.

> Κεβριόνην, νόθον υἱὸν ἀγακλῆος Πριάμοιο . . . .
>
> (XVI. 738)

The suggestion that this consistency in the use of ἐϋμμελίης is due to an association between the ash spear and destruction is perhaps strained, but it is corroborated by the connotations of the ash spear elsewhere in the *Iliad*.

The use of ἐϋμμελίης after the arming of Patroklos is equally restricted; there it is applied again only to a single figure, Euphorbos, or collectively in the plural to Euphorbos and his brother Hyperenor. When Patroklos has died at the hands of Apollo, Euphorbos, and Hektor, Menelaos comes forward to defend his corpse, and Euphorbos advances from the other side to face him (XVII. 1-9).

οὐδ' ἄρα Πάνθου υἱὸς ἐϋμμελίης ἀμέλησε
Πατρόκλοιο πεσόντος ἀμύμονος· ἄγχι δ' ἄρ' αὐτοῦ
ἔστη, καὶ προσέειπεν ἀρηΐφιλον Μενέλαον·

(XVII. 9-11)

Euphorbos lays claim to the spoils of Patroklos on the grounds that he was the first among the Trojans to strike Patroklos (12-17); Menelaos replies by boasting that he killed Euphorbos' brother and by threatening to do the same to him (18-32).

"οὔτ' οὖν παρδάλιος τόσσον μένος οὔτε λέοντος
οὔτε συὸς κάπρου ὀλοόφρονος, οὗ τε μέγιστος
θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι περὶ σθένεϊ βλεμεαίνει,
ὅσσον Πάνθου υἷες ἐϋμμελίαι φρονέουσιν.
οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδὲ βίη Ὑπερήνορος ἱπποδάμοιο
ἧς ἥβης ἀπόνηθ', ὅτε μ' ὤνατο καί μ' ὑπέμεινε. . . ."

(XVII. 20-25)

Euphorbos counters with a threat to avenge his brother's death (XVII. 33-42) and unsuccessfully strikes at Menelaos' shield (43-45); finally, the dying Euphorbos, stabbed in the neck by Menelaos, is compared to a carefully tended olive tree uprooted by a storm (45-60).

τοῖον Πάνθου υἱὸν ἐϋμμελίην Εὔφορβον
'Ατρεΐδης Μενέλαος ἐπεὶ κτάνε, τεύχε' ἐσύλα.

(XVII. 59-60)

The adjective ἐϋμμελίης occurs at no other point in the *Iliad* than the six listed here, so that its repetition three times in the short passage describing Euphorbos' death places a great deal of emphasis on the importance of his possession of an ash spear at this point in the narrative.

It is perhaps relevant, though of minor importance, to note that both Priam and Euphorbos possess the epithet only in passages which describe their respective dooms; in the case of Euphorbos, however, the most important consideration is the way in which

Euphorbos appears to have obtained an epithet meaning "possessing a strong ash spear". The motivation for the epithet is obviously to be found in the one other scene in the *Iliad* in which Euphorbos appears, the death of Patroklos at the end of book sixteen, immediately preceding the death of Euphorbos at the beginning of seventeen. In that scene, although it is Apollo who vanquishes Patroklos by disarming him (XVI. 788-805), the dying Patroklos himself acknowledges, in his reply to Hektor's victorious boast (830-842), that Euphorbos was the first among mortals to strike him and the man most responsible for his death.

> "ἀλλά με μοῖρ' ὀλοὴ καὶ Λητοῦς ἔκτανεν υἱός,
> ἀνδρῶν δ' Εὔφορβος· σὺ δέ με τρίτος ἐξεναρίζεις."
>
> (XVI. 849-850)

Euphorbos echoes this claim to precedence in his warning to Menelaos before their combat over the corpse of Patroklos.

> "οὐ γάρ τις πρότερος Τρώων κλειτῶν τ' ἐπικούρων
> Πάτροκλον βάλε δουρὶ κατὰ κρατερὴν ὑσμίνην·"
>
> (XVII. 14-15)

It ought by now to be obvious from the direction of the argument that it is an ash spear with which Euphorbos wounds Patroklos and from which he acquires the epithet ἐϋμμελίης in the subsequent scene.

> στῆ [Πάτροκλος] δὲ ταφών· ὄπιθεν δὲ μετάφρενον ὀξέϊ δουρὶ
> ὤμων μεσσηγὺς σχεδόθεν βάλε Δάρδανος ἀνήρ,
> Πανθοΐδης Εὔφορβος, ὃς ἡλικίην ἐκέκαστο
> ἔγχεΐ θ' ἱπποσύνῃ τε πόδεσσί τε καρπαλίμοισι·
> . . . .
> ὅς τοι πρῶτος ἐφῆκε βέλος, Πατρόκλεες ἱππεῦ,
> οὐδὲ δάμασσ'· ὁ μὲν αὖτις ἀνέδραμε, μίκτο δ' ὁμίλῳ,
> ἐκ χροὸς ἁρπάξας δόρυ μείλινον, οὐδ' ὑπέμεινε
> Πάτροκλον γυμνόν περ ἐόντ' ἐν δηϊοτῆτι.
>
> (XVI. 806-809 & 812-815)

There are two minor points in this passage which are related to earlier observations and which are most conveniently noted here. The first of them is the simile, which I have mentioned frequently, comparing the conflict of the Trojans and the Greeks to a forest of storm-tossed trees, specifically φηγός, μελίη, and κράνεια. Its relevance here is its proximity to the passage in which Euphorbos wounds Patroklos with an ash spear; the simile occurs at the

beginning of the battle over the body of Kebriones (XVI. 765-769), and it is later in that same battle, after the Achaians have succeeded, ὑπὲρ αἶσαν (780), in despoiling the corpse, that Patroklos encounters his fate as he attacks the Trojans.

> ἔνθ' ἄρα τοι, Πάτροκλε, φάνη βιότοιο τελευτή·
>
> (XVI. 787)

The ash spear plays a role so important in this battle that Euphorbos acquires an emphatically repeated epithet from it in the subsequent scene, and it is clearly more than coincidence that the simile which introduces the battle contains an ash tree and the semantically and mythologically associated Valonia oak. The most pertinent characteristic of the κράνεια, or cornel cherry, is its absence in the rest of the *Iliad*. By this point in the narrative, the ash spear has assumed a thematic connotation of extraordinary destruction, a connotation noted initially in the scene leading up to the firing of the ships at the beginning of book sixteen and to be pursued through the remainder of the battle narrative of the *Iliad*.

The second minor point concerns the epithet ἐϋμμελίης as applied to Priam in the expression ἐϋμμελίω Πριάμοιο (IV. 47 = IV. 165 = VI. 449) and its replacement by the adjective ἀγακλεής in the passage which describes the death of Kebriones at the hands of Patroklos.

> οὐδ' ἁλίωσε βέλος, βάλε δ' Ἕκτορος ἡνιοχῆα,
> Κεβριόνην, νόθον υἱὸν ἀγακλῆος Πριάμοιο, ...
>
> (XVI. 737-738)

The death of Kebriones obviously initiates the battle over his corpse in which Patroklos is killed. The existence of two metrically and syntactically equivalent epithets for the same character is a clear violation of Parry's principle of economy in oral composition; in this case there are two apparent contextual factors in the narrative which motivate the redundant epithet. The first of them is the previously mentioned restriction of the expression ἐϋμμελίω Πριάμοιο to speeches foretelling the destruction of Troy; the use of ἐϋμμελίης here would violate that pattern of conceptual association. The second factor motivating the use of ἀγακλεής here is, again, the proximity of scenes in which an ash spear and Euphorbos, designated its possessor by the epithet ἐϋμμελίης, are of central importance, so that the use of ἐϋμμελίης with Priam

here, outside its accustomed context of catastrophic prophecy, would not only violate the associative patterns surrounding the expression itself but would also intrude an unrelated and distracting element into a scene in which the epithet and the weapon which it denotes have an important and specific thematic meaning. The introduction of a compositionally redundant epithet is consequently acceptable in order to maintain the conceptual system associated with ἐϋμμελίω Πριάμοιο and to avoid the introduction of an intrusive element which would interfere with the thematic structure of the scene as a whole.

There are in addition two more general points to be observed in the passage which describes the wounding of Patroklos by Euphorbos' spear. The first of them is the exact point in the description at which the expression δόρυ μείλινον occurs; the ash spear, as a specific expression, is used to describe not the stroke with which Euphorbos wounds Patroklos but instead Euphorbos' extraction of the spear and simultaneous retreat from his wounded victim.

> οὐδὲ δάμασσ'· ὁ μὲν αὖτις ἀνέδραμε, μίκτο δ' ὁμίλῳ,
> ἐκ χροὸς ἁρπάξας δόρυ μείλινον, οὐδ' ὑπέμεινε . . . .
> (XVI. 813-814)

This is a repetition of the persistent importance attached to the retrieval of the ash spear, a theme noted previously in the occurrences of δόρυ μείλινον and μείλινον ἔγχος in the section of the *Iliad* before the arming of Patroklos. Its significance is as yet unclear, even in this passage, for in the subsequent scene Euphorbos' spear, presumably the same one, proves impotent against the shield of Menelaos.[73]

[73] It is of course tempting to conjecture that the connection implied between Priam and Euphorbos by their shared epithet ἐϋμμελίης extends also to this impotence of the ash spear at the moment of death, and that that is the reason for the consistent association of the expression ἐϋμμελίω Πριάμοιο with descriptions of the destruction of Priam and his people. Proklos says only:

> καὶ Νεοπτόλεμος μὲν ἀποκτείνει Πρίαμον ἐπὶ τὸν τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Ἑρκείου βωμὸν καταφυγόντα,

of the *Iliou Persis*, but Virgil's account is somewhat fuller.

> sic fatus senior, telumque imbelle sine ictu
> coniecit, rauco quod protinus aere repulsum
> et summo clipei nequiquam umbone pependit.
> (*Aeneid* II. 544-546)

Priam is then killed by Pyrrhus—that is, Neoptolemos (cf. *Cypria*, fr. 14

Ὣς εἰπὼν οὔτησε κατ' ἀσπίδα πάντοσ' ἐΐσην·
οὐδ' ἔρρηξεν χαλκός, ἀνεγνάμφθη δέ οἱ αἰχμὴ
ἀσπίδ' ἐνὶ κρατερῇ· . . . . .

(XVII. 43-45)

The repeated need to retrieve the ash spear apparently serves to emphasize the importance of the weapon to its owner and its potential prominence in subsequent battles; the confirmation of this hypothesis will appear in association with Achilles' ash spear.

This emphasis on the recovery of the ash spear appears to be the result of the decisive role which it frequently plays in the narrative, and that is the second general point to be made about this passage, for here, as in the previously noted case of Aias' ash spear, the weapon appears at a critical point in the epic and is of pivotal importance in its development. In this case, that role is so evident as not to require comment, and in the remainder of the *Iliad* the decisive nature of the ash spear becomes even more obvious. The recent concentration of the argument on the adjective ἐϋμμελίης has obscured the rather artificial division which I had established in the *Iliad* at the arming of Patroklos, but the validity of the division at the scene in which Achilles' ash spear first appears is affirmed by the consistency of the occurrences of all three of the words which refer to the ash—μελίη, μείλινον, and ἐϋμμελίης—after that point. Once Achilles' ash spear has made its initial appearance, it is such a dominant thematic force that not only is μελίη restricted to describing it, but the other two words related to the ash spear, μείλινον and ἐϋμμελίης, are also restricted, either to Achilles and Patroklos or to their opponents in battle. Euphorbos is the only figure in this section to be designated ἐϋμμελίης and is the only character who possesses a δόρυ μείλινον during Patroklos' participation in the fighting and the subsequent battle over his body, a possible indication of his momentary superiority over Patroklos and a partial measure of Patroklos' inferiority to Achilles as a warrior.

There is a single exception to this uniformly consistent application of the terms for ash spears after the arming of Patroklos,

Allen)—on the altar. The similarity between the ineffective casts of Priam against Neoptolemos in the *Aeneid* and Euphorbos against Menelaos in the *Iliad* reinforces the initial conjecture based on the shared epithet, and I at least am satisfied that all the available evidence points toward Priam's possession of an ash spear in the scene of his death in the *Iliou Persis,* although I recognize that the evidence is both incomplete and inconclusive.

and its placement in the narrative makes it the most superficial sort of exception. As the Greeks, with Achilles finally among them, prepare for the last day of battle in the *Iliad*, there is an extended description of the marshalling of their arms.

ὡς δ' ὅτε ταρφειαὶ νιφάδες Διὸς ἐκποτέονται,
ψυχραί, ὑπὸ ῥιπῆς αἰθρηγενέος Βορέαο,
ὣς τότε ταρφειαὶ κόρυθες λαμπρὸν γανόωσαι
νηῶν ἐκφορέοντο καὶ ἀσπίδες ὀμφαλόεσσαι
θώρηκές τε κραταιγύαλοι καὶ μείλινα δοῦρα.
αἴγλη δ' οὐρανὸν ἷκε, γέλασσε δὲ πᾶσα περὶ χθὼν
χαλκοῦ ὑπὸ στεροπῆς· ὑπὸ δὲ κτύπος ὄρνυτο ποσσὶν
ἀνδρῶν· ἐν δὲ μέσοισι κορύσσετο δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.
(XIX. 357-364)

The list of weapons here is an approximate parallel of the negative catalogue of the Lokrians' arms (XIII. 714-715), and the appearance of the ash spears in this passage might be accepted simply as a similar generalization. This description of arms, however, immediately follows Athene's visit to the Greek camp in order to strengthen Achilles with an infusion of nektar and ambrosia, and it directly precedes the physical description of Achilles which leads into the arming of Achilles.

τοῦ καὶ ὀδόντων μὲν καναχὴ πέλε, τὼ δέ οἱ ὄσσε
λαμπέσθην ὡς εἴ τε πυρὸς σέλας, ἐν δέ οἱ ἦτορ
δῦν' ἄχος ἄτλητον· ὁ δ' ἄρα Τρωσὶν μενεαίνων
δύσετο δῶρα θεοῦ, τά οἱ Ἥφαιστος κάμε τεύχων.
(XIX. 365-368)

Achilles' arming, containing the repetition of the description of his ash spear (388-391), follows, so that this general catalogue of the Greeks' weapons, bracketed as it is by passages recounting Achilles' divine nourishment and his arming, is an integral part of Achilles' preparation for battle, and the appearance of ash spears is consequently not surprising.

There is also a juxtaposition of Achilles, the ash spears, and weaponry in general to the imagery of light and fire—light in the description of the arms with the phrases λαμπρὸν γανόωσαι (359) and αἴγλη δ' οὐρανὸν ἷκε (362), fire in Achilles' eyes, which λαμπέσθην ὡς εἴ τε πυρὸς σέλας (366), and finally lightning and thunder in a metaphor for the whole panoply.

χαλκοῦ ὑπὸ στεροπῆς· ὑπὸ δὲ κτύπος ὄρνυτο ποσσὶν . . . .
(XIX. 363)

The basis of the general association between the ash, fire, and lightning has already been examined; the importance of the specific connection between the ash spear and lightning described with the word στεροπή becomes clear in the course of the description of Achilles' participation in the battle.

Achilles' prominence in battle is anticipated, as is that of other heroes, by a description of his arming which emphasizes the pieces of equipment which will be most important in decisive scenes. The emphasis on the shield is obvious, and the importance of his ash spear is indicated by a repetition of the lines which explained, at the time of Patroklos' arming, why he did not take the ash spear.

> ⎰ἔγχος δ' οὐχ ἕλετ' οἷον ἀμύμονος Αἰακίδαο (XVI. 140) ⎱
> ⎱ἐκ δ' ἄρα σύριγγος πατρώϊον ἐσπάσατ' ἔγχος (XIX. 387) ⎰
> βριθὺ μέγα στιβαρόν· τὸ μὲν οὐ δύνατ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν
> πάλλειν, ἀλλά μιν οἷος ἐπίστατο πῆλαι Ἀχιλλεύς,
> Πηλιάδα μελίην, τὴν πατρὶ φίλῳ πόρε Χείρων
> Πηλίου ἐκ κορυφῆς, φόνον ἔμμεναι ἡρώεσσιν.
> (XIX. 388-391 = XVI. 141-144)

Because Patroklos did not take the ash spear, it was not lost to Hektor, and it is consequently the only piece of his original armor which remains to Achilles. As this repeated passage emphasizes, the spear, like the rest of the armor, had been inherited by Achilles from his mortal father; after his immortal mother has reequipped him with divine arms from Hephaistos, the ash spear is Achilles' last remaining link with his mortal parent, a singularly appropriate role considering the ash tree's associations with mortality, mortal ancestry, and the origin of the human race.[74]

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[74] I am indebted to Professor John Finley for having pointed out to me in Pindar an additional connection between Peleus and Cheiron which hinges on a weapon and which takes place on Mount Pelion.

> Παλίου δὲ πὰρ ποδὶ λατρίαν Ἰαολκὸν
> πολεμίᾳ χερὶ προστραχὼν
> Πηλεὺς παρέδωκεν Αἱμόνεσσιν
> δάμαρτος Ἱππολύτας Ἀκάστου δολίαις
> τέχναισι χρησάμενος.
> τᾷ Δαιδάλου δὲ μαχαίρᾳ φύτευέ οἱ θάνατον
> ἐκ λόχου Πελίαο παῖς. ἄλαλκε δὲ Χίρων,
> καὶ τὸ μόρσιμον Διόθεν πεπρωμένον ἔκφερεν·
> πῦρ δὲ παγκρατὲς θρασυμαχάνων τε λεόντων
> ὄνυχας ὀξυτάτους ἀκμὰν

The spear is also clearly a link between the arming scenes of Patroklos and Achilles, and the repetition of the special nature and origin of the spear emphasizes the difference between the two heroes. The reiterated description brackets Patroklos' substitution for Achilles in the battle, and just as the exchange of armor stresses Patroklos' role as a surrogate for Achilles, Achilles' retention of the spear affirms his individuality and his special prowess. The ash spear consequently both unifies the two preparations for, and entries into, battle and also defines the distinction between the two heroes.

A further, and perhaps even more important, reason for this emphasis on the ash spear is its prominence at decisive points in the ensuing battle. After the arming of Achilles, the terms μελίη and μείλινον are not only restricted to Achilles and, in the case of the adjective, his opponents; they are also limited to three climactic confrontations. More presicely, in the three books XX through XXII, twelve occurrences of the two words—eight of

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καὶ δεινοτάτων σχάσαις ὀδόντων
ἔγαμεν ὑψιθρόνων μίαν Νηρεΐδων.

(*Nemean* IV. 54-65)

Pindar's allusive and difficult account is complicated by textual problems (see Farnell's commentary, vol. 2 of his *Works of Pindar*, London, 1932, pp. 268-271), but the scholiast on this passage makes the details of Akastos' plan more clear by suggesting an emendation and quoting Hesiod (frag. 79 Rzach).

Δίδυμος δέ φησι δεῖν γράφειν διὰ τοῦ ῳ· δαιδάλῳ δὲ μαχαίρᾳ δόλον ἤρτυσε τῷ Πηλεῖ, παρελόμενος αὐτοῦ κρύφα, ἵνα χωρὶς ἀμυντηρίου ἁλοὺς ὑπὸ τῶν Κενταύρων φθαρῇ. ταῦτα δὲ ἱστοροῦσι πολλοὶ μέν, ἀτὰρ δὴ καὶ Ἡσίοδος λέγων οὕτως·

ἥδε δέ οἱ κατὰ θυμὸν ἀρίστη φαίνετο βουλή·
αὐτὸν μὲν σχέσθαι, κρύψαι δ' ἀδόκητα μάχαιραν
καλήν, ἥν οἱ ἔτευξε περίκλυτος Ἀμφιγυήεις
ὡς τὴν μαστεύων οἶος κατὰ Πήλιον αἰπὺ
αἶψ' ὑπὸ Κενταύροισιν ὀρεσκῴοισι δαμείη.

(Schol. *Nemean* IV. 59 (95), Drachmann, vol. III. pp. 80-81)

See Drachmann, vol. III. pp. 79-82, for further observations. The reason for Akastos' hostility is clarified in *Nemean* V. 25-34; Akastos' wife Hippolyta tried to seduce Peleus while he was her husband's guest, and when Peleus refused, she made the standard accusation to Akastos, who, fearing to kill his guest, conceived the plan of abandoning Peleus on Pelion by stealing his dagger. The capture of Iolkos was Peleus' revenge after he had been saved by Cheiron (see Farnell, vol. I, p. 180).

For more on the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, see *Pythian* III. 86-103 and R. Reitzenstein, "Die Hochzeit des Peleus und der Thetis", *Hermes* 35 (1900), pp. 73-105.

μελίη and four of μείλινον—are restricted exclusively to three critical battles: three in the combat between Achilles and Aeneas (XX. 272, 277, and 322), five in the one between Achilles and Asteropaios (XXI. 162, 169, 172, 174, and 178), and four in the climactic battle of Achilles and Hektor (XXII. 133, 225, 293, and 328). This strict limitation on the use of the terms for "ash spear" implies that the weapon has a specific thematic significance which is reserved for carefully selected episodes in order to avoid diluting its meaning by overuse in scenes of less relative importance to the narrative.

The care with which the use of μελίη and μείλινον is regulated is confirmed as soon as Achilles enters the battle, for the first concentration of terms for the ash spear occurs in Achilles' first combat in the *Iliad*, his fight with Aeneas, so that Achilles' entry into battle is introduced by an emphatic practical demonstration of the importance of his principal individual weapon, restating the previous emphasis placed on it by the repeated descriptions of its origin. The battle opens, at the beginning of the twentieth book, with Zeus' permission for the other gods to enter the fighting as they please, in order to prevent Achilles from dominating it entirely (XX. 1-53). As they take up their opposing positions (54-74), Apollo, disguised as Lykaon, urges Aeneas to challenge Achilles (75-85), but Aeneas refuses both because he has been previously defeated by Achilles and because Achilles is invincible.

> "τῷ οὐκ ἔστ' Ἀχιλῆος ἐναντίον ἄνδρα μάχεσθαι·
> αἰεὶ γὰρ πάρα εἷς γε θεῶν, ὃς λοιγὸν ἀμύνει.
> καὶ δ' ἄλλως τοῦ γ' ἰθὺ βέλος πέτετ', οὐδ' ἀπολήγει
> πρὶν χροὸς ἀνδρομέοιο διελθέμεν. εἰ δὲ θεός περ
> ἶσον τείνειεν πολέμου τέλος, οὔ κε μάλα ῥέα
> νικήσει', οὐδ' εἰ παγχάλκεος εὔχεται εἶναι."
>
> (XX. 97-102)

Aeneas refuses to fight Achilles because of Achilles' invincibility, which is based on divine aid and the persistent accuracy of his spear. It should, however, be noted that the poet, by means of Aeneas' excuse, creates a false impression of the spear's accuracy here, before Achilles enters the battle. That impression, which is almost immediately refuted by the lack of success of Achilles' ash spear against Aeneas, is another means of emphasizing the spear's importance. Aeneas' final remark appears to be an allusion to the bronze race; Achilles' boast that he is παγχάλκεος is a claim

of affinity to the invincible warriors of the bronze race, which sprang, like Achilles' spear, from ash trees.

In reply to this refusal, Apollo argues Aeneas' superior genealogy; since his mother is a greater goddess than Achilles' mother, Aeneas ought not to fear him (104-109). After an interlude of divine plotting (115-152) and a description of the advance of the combatants (156-163), the same argument is repeated with a reversal of roles by Aeneas, so that when Achilles warns him off by referring to the same defeat which Aeneas had described to Apollo (178-198), Aeneas responds with an expanded version of Apollo's genealogical argument, first comparing their immediate parentage and then proceeding to a long, detailed account of his paternal line, which he traces, through seven generations, back to Zeus (200-243). Achilles' first combat consequently emerges as a contest of genealogies very similar to the one between Sarpedon and Tlepolemos, the only episode before the arming of Patroklos in which the ash spear appears more than once (three times: V. 655, 666, and 694). The recurrent appearance of ash spears in scenes of compared genealogy is clearly related to the ash tree's role in the origin of mankind; that three of the four warriors in these scenes trace their ancestry to Zeus may reflect again the ash-born bronze race, which was the first race created by Zeus (*Works and Days* 143-151).

The extraction of the ash spear is also an important feature of the battle between Sarpedon and Tlepolemos, and the reason for the emphasis on the dragging and removal of Tlepolemos' spear from the wounded Sarpedon in that scene becomes clear in the battle between Achilles and Aeneas. This combat is not only Achilles' debut, but it is also the first test of his new armor; Achilles is called a fool for fearing that Aeneas' spear will break through his divine shield.

> νήπιος, οὐδ' ἐνόησε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμὸν
> ὡς οὐ ῥηΐδι' ἐστὶ θεῶν ἐρικυδέα δῶρα
> ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι δαμήμεναι οὐδ' ὑποείκειν.
> οὐδὲ τότ' Αἰνείαο δαΐφρονος ὄβριμον ἔγχος
> ῥῆξε σάκος· χρυσὸς γὰρ ἐρύκακε, δῶρα θεοῖο·
> ἀλλὰ δύω μὲν ἔλασσε διὰ πτύχας, αἱ δ' ἄρ' ἔτι τρεῖς
> ἦσαν, ἐπεὶ πέντε πτύχας ἤλασε κυλλοποδίων,
> τὰς δύο χαλκείας, δύο δ' ἔνδοθι κασσιτέροιο,
> τὴν δὲ μίαν χρυσέην, τῇ ῥ' ἔσχετο μείλινον ἔγχος.
>
> (XX. 264-272)

The impermeability of Achilles' armor is emphasized by the fact that Aeneas has unsuccessfully assaulted it with an ash spear. Achilles' own cast is more successful against Aeneas' shield but fails against the hero himself, contrasting the armament of two warriors neither of whom is yet fated to die.

. . . . ἡ δὲ διαπρὸ
Πηλιὰς ἤϊξεν μελίη, λάκε δ' ἀσπὶς ὑπ' αὐτῆς.
Αἰνείας δ' ἐάλη καὶ ἀπὸ ἕθεν ἀσπίδ' ἀνέσχε
δείσας· ἐγχείη δ' ἄρ' ὑπὲρ νώτου ἐνὶ γαίῃ
ἔστη ἱεμένη, διὰ δ' ἀμφοτέρους ἕλε κύκλους
ἀσπίδος ἀμφιβρότης· . . . .

(XX. 276-281)

Neither combatant now has a spear, and so Achilles draws his sword and Aeneas picks up a rock, and they both prepare to attack (281-291). Poseidon, however, with the consent of Hera, intervenes to prevent the unfated death of Aeneas (293-317).

αὐτίκα τῷ μὲν ἔπειτα κατ' ὀφθαλμῶν χέεν ἀχλύν,
Πηλεΐδῃ Ἀχιλῆϊ· ὁ δὲ μελίην εὔχαλκον
ἀσπίδος ἐξέρυσεν μεγαλήτορος Αἰνείαο·
καὶ τὴν μὲν προπάροιθε ποδῶν Ἀχιλῆος ἔθηκεν,
Αἰνείαν δ' ἔσσευεν ἀπὸ χθονὸς ὑψόσ' ἀείρας.

(XX. 321-325)

Poseidon's return of the ash spear to Achilles clarifies the reason for the persistent appearance of ash spears in contexts of extraction and retrieval in the first part of the *Iliad* (V. 666; 694; VI. 65; XIII. 597); the spear is of such focal importance to Achilles' armament that his continued possession of it must be emphasized and explained. The emphasis is reiterated when Achilles himself expresses the surprise which the audience might well have experienced had not his recovery of his most important weapon been explained.

"ὢ πόποι, ἦ μέγα θαῦμα τόδ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὁρῶμαι
ἔγχος μὲν τόδε κεῖται ἐπὶ χθονός, οὐδέ τι φῶτα
λεύσσω, τῷ ἐφέηκα κατακτάμεναι μενεαίνων."

(XX. 344-346)

The necessity to explain Achilles' retention of a previously cast ash spear apparently attached itself to earlier scenes in which the extraction or retrieval of a spear was important and suggested by association that any recovered spear must be made of ash.

The emphasis on extraction and recovery continues in the next

episode in which the ash spear appears, the combat between Achilles and Asteropaios. This battle, moreover, contains a larger concentration of terms for the ash spear than any other scene in the *Iliad*, and the importance ascribed to this scene by its five references to the ash spear is confirmed by Asteropaios' role and by the narrative context of the combat. It begins with the familiar account of Asteropaios' genealogical background, repeated first by the poet (XXI. 140-143) and then by Asteropaios himself, at the request of Achilles (153-160); he is the son of Pelegon and the grandson of the river Axios.

> Ὣς φάτ' ἀπειλήσας, ὁ δ' ἀνέσχετο δῖος Ἀχιλλεὺς
> Πηλιάδα μελίην· ὁ δ' ἁμαρτῇ δούρασιν ἀμφὶς
> ἥρως Ἀστεροπαῖος, ἐπεὶ περιδέξιος ἦεν.
>
> (XXI. 161-163)

Achilles' ash spear is introduced as he brandishes it at the beginning of the battle, for it is to play the central role in the death of Asteropaios. After the ambidextrous Asteropaios has cast both his spears simultaneously and failed to do more than graze Achilles' forearm, Achilles attacks.

> δεύτερος αὖτ' Ἀχιλεὺς μελίην ἰθυπτίωνα
> Ἀστεροπαίῳ ἐφῆκε κατακτάμεναι μενεαίνων.
> καὶ τοῦ μέν ῥ' ἀφάμαρτεν, ὁ δ' ὑψηλὴν βάλεν ὄχθην,
> μεσσοπαγὲς δ' ἄρ' ἔθηκε κατ' ὄχθης μείλινον ἔγχος.
> Πηλεΐδης δ' ἄορ ὀξὺ ἐρυσσάμενος παρὰ μηροῦ
> ἆλτ' ἐπί οἱ μεμαώς· ὁ δ' ἄρα μελίην Ἀχιλῆος
> οὐ δύνατ' ἐκ κρημνοῖο ἐρύσσαι χειρὶ παχείῃ.
> τρὶς μέν μιν πελέμιξεν ἐρύσσασθαι μενεαίνων,
> τρὶς δὲ μεθῆκε βίης· τὸ δὲ τέτρατον ἤθελε θυμῷ
> ἆξαι ἐπιγνάμψας δόρυ μείλινον Αἰακίδαο,
> ἀλλὰ πρὶν Ἀχιλεὺς σχεδὸν ἄορι θυμὸν ἀπηύρα.
>
> (XXI. 169-179)

Asteropaios' attempted extraction of Achilles' spear from the river bank obviously fits the pattern of vital necessity attached to recovery of a spear specifically made of ash wood and reaffirms the hypothesis that the important themes associated with Achilles' spear came to limit the use of the ash spear to specific similar scenes in the first part of the *Iliad*. It should be noted that Achilles himself does not neglect to retrieve his spear after his boast over the corpse of Asteropaios.

Ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἐκ κρημνοῖο ἐρύσσατο χάλκεον ἔγχος,
τὸν δὲ κατ' αὐτόθι λεῖπεν, ἐπεὶ φίλον ἦτορ ἀπηύρα,
κείμενον ἐν ψαμάθοισι, δίαινε δέ μιν μέλαν ὕδωρ.

(XXI. 200-202)

The reason for the prominence of Achilles' ash spear in the battle which leads to Asteropaios' death is nevertheless initially unclear; he is designated the best warrior among the Paionians in the battle over the body of Patroklos, but that is only to be expected since he is their leader (XVII. 351-352). His prowess had been previously mentioned in the first Trojan attack on the Greek camp, when Sarpedon chose him and Glaukos to accompany him in addition to his own troops.

Σαρπηδὼν δ' ἡγήσατ' ἀγακλειτῶν ἐπικούρων,
πρὸς δ' ἕλετο Γλαῦκον καὶ ἀρήϊον Ἀστεροπαῖον·
οἱ γάρ οἱ εἴσαντο διακριδὸν εἶναι ἄριστοι
τῶν ἄλλων μετά γ' αὐτόν· ὁ δ' ἔπρεπε καὶ διὰ πάντων.

(XII. 101-104)

The connection with Glaukos is interesting because of Glaukos' notorious participation in an exchange of armor, and the juxtaposition recurs in a catalogue of ten champions exhorted by Hektor (XVII. 215-218). The connection with an exchange of arms is strengthened in this scene, for Hektor's exhortation immediately follows his own ill advised change into Achilles' original armor (XVII. 188-197), Zeus' declaration of his fate (201-208), and his increase in strength and stature due to the new armor (209-214). This rather tenuous connection between Asteropaios and exchanges of arms finds some firmer ground after his death; at Patroklos' funeral games, Achilles twice offers articles of Asteropaios' armor as prizes. The first is his breastplate, which Achilles gives to Eumelos, the loser of the chariot race, after Antilochos has protested its rather dubious outcome.

"δώσω οἱ θώρηκα, τὸν Ἀστεροπαῖον ἀπηύρων,
χάλκεον, ᾧ πέρι χεῦμα φαεινοῦ κασσιτέροιο
ἀμφιδεδίνηται· πολέος δέ οἱ ἄξιος ἔσται."

(XXIII. 560-562)

Later in the games, Achilles offers the arms of Sarpedon as a common prize for both contestants in the single combat and the sword of Asteropaios for the one to draw first blood.

"τῷ μὲν ἐγὼ δώσω τόδε φάσγανον ἀργυρόηλον
καλὸν Θρηΐκιον, τὸ μὲν Ἀστεροπαῖον ἀπηύρων·"

(XXIII. 807-808)

Diomedes receives the sword when the Greeks stop the combat before blood is drawn out of fear that Diomedes may wound his opponent Aias seriously (820-825). This continued attention to Asteropaios' arms and the importance apparently attributed to them by Achilles may be a partial reason for the prominence of Achilles' ash spear in the scene of Asteropaios' death, but it is hardly a convincing explanation for so extraordinary an emphasis, and Asteropaios appears nowhere else in the *Iliad*.

Since Asteropaios himself is not important enough a figure to merit the emphatic attention which his death receives, the reason for the emphasis must be sought in the episode itself. The battle begins with what is often considered the height of Achilles' enraged brutality, his killing of the suppliant Lykaon, whom he had previously taken prisoner and sold (XXI. 34-119). After Achilles has thrown the corpse of his unarmed opponent into the Skamander, he not only derides the dead man; he also insults the river.

> "φθείρεσθ', είς ὅ κεν ἄστυ κιχείομεν Ἰλίου ἱρῆς,
> ὑμεῖς μὲν φεύγοντες, ἐγὼ δ' ὄπιθεν κεραΐζων.
> οὐδ' ὑμῖν ποταμός περ ἐΰρροος ἀργυροδίνης
> ἀρκέσει, ᾧ δὴ δηθὰ πολέας ἱερεύετε ταύρους,
> ζωοὺς δ' ἐν δίνῃσι καθίετε μώνυχας ἵππους."
>
> (XXI. 128-132)

In response to the insult, Skamander plots revenge and a defence for the Trojans.

> Ὣς ἄρ' ἔφη, ποταμὸς δὲ χολώσατο κηρόθι μᾶλλον
> ὅρμηνεν δ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ὅπως παύσειε πόνοιο
> δῖον Ἀχιλλῆα, Τρώεσσι δὲ λοιγὸν ἀλάλκοι.
>
> (XXI. 136-138)

Skamander's angry plans are, however, abruptly interrupted by the combat of Achilles and Asteropaios (139 ff.), and he only acts on his anger at the end of the battle after a further insult from Achilles, and after Achilles has in addition killed seven of Asteropaios' Paionian followers (205-210). At this point the river finally lodges a surprisingly polite complaint with Achilles (214-221), but when Achilles replies that he will continue to slaughter the Trojans (222-226), Skamander reproaches Apollo for his failure to defend the Trojans (228-232) and attacks Achilles, pursuing him over the plain (233 ff.). In the end, Achilles is rescued from the river by Hephaistos at the request of Hera, who

had feared for Achilles' life. Hera's instructions to Hephaistos offer an accurate and compressed description of the battle which follows.

"ὄρσεο, κυλλοπόδιον, ἐμὸν τέκος· ἄντα σέθεν γὰρ
Ξάνθον δινήεντα μάχῃ ἠΐσκομεν εἶναι·
ἀλλ' ἐπάμυνε τάχιστα, πιφαύσκεο δὲ φλόγα πολλήν.
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ Ζεφύροιο καὶ ἀργεστᾶο Νότοιο
εἴσομαι ἐξ ἁλόθεν χαλεπὴν ὄρσουσα θύελλαν,
ἥ κεν ἀπὸ Τρώων κεφαλὰς καὶ τεύχεα κήαι,
φλέγμα κακὸν φορέουσα· σὺ δὲ Ξάνθοιο παρ' ὄχθας
δένδρεα καῖ', ἐν δ' αὐτὸν ἵει πυρί· μηδέ σε πάμπαν
μειλιχίοις ἐπέεσσιν ἀποτρεπέτω καὶ ἀρειῇ."

(XXI. 331-339)

After Hephaistos has defeated Skamander in an extremely graphic and effective expanded account of this elemental conflict between fire and water (342-382), a general melee breaks out among the divided gods (383-513). Both the general divine battle and the specific fight between Skamander and Hephaistos are anticipated at the beginning of this day of battle, when Zeus allows the gods to enter the fighting as they please; Hephaistos and Skamander are already confronting each other there.

Λητοῖ δ' ἀντέστη σῶκος ἐριούνιος Ἑρμῆς,
ἄντα δ' ἄρ' Ἡφαίστοιο μέγας ποταμὸς βαθυδίνης,
ὃν Ξάνθον καλέουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δὲ Σκάμανδρον.

(XX. 72-74)

It is clear that, in the battle with the river, Hephaistos, the creator of Achilles' new arms, has replaced Achilles in an apparent reaffirmation of his earlier pyrotechnic support, since Achilles himself cannot match the river even with his most famous attribute, his swiftness of foot.

ὣς αἰεὶ Ἀχιλῆα κιχήσατο κῦμα ῥόοιο
καὶ λαιψηρὸν ἐόντα· θεοὶ δέ τε φέρτεροι ἀνδρῶν.

(XXI. 263-264)

Achilles and his patron Hephaistos are identified through their common attribute, fire (e.g., XVIII. 205-214),[75] and Hephaistos with his divine fire replaces Achilles' mortal fire in the battle against the immortal river. The encounter with Skamander is,

[75] On this theme throughout the *Iliad*, see C. H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition*, Harvard Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1963, pp. 128-153, to whom I am much indebted both for my argument and for my method.

however, postponed by Achilles' battle with Asteropaios, the mortal grandson of the river Axios (XXI. 139-160), an ancestry emphasized by its reiteration at the beginning of the fight. The conflict between the divine personifications of fire and water is thus preceded and retarded by a parallel battle between the mortal representatives of the same two elements, a battle in which Achilles' ash spear, with all the pyrogenic connotations of the ash tree, plays one of the most important roles it has in the *Iliad*. The results of both battles, like the battles themselves, are parallel; fire triumphs over water.

This interpretation of the themes of this episode is supported by the structure of the passage, which is a circular digression from what would otherwise be a purely linear narrative. Although Skamander is initially angered by Achilles' insult to him after the brutal slaying of Lykaon, whose corpse, thrown into the river by Achilles (120-121), epitomizes the bodies choking Skamander's channel, he first sends Asteropaios as his representative against Achilles.

> τῷ ['Ἀστεροπαίῳ] ῥ' Ἀχιλεὺς ἐπόρουσεν, ὁ δ' ἀντίος ἐκ ποταμοῖο
> ἔστη ἔχων δύο δοῦρε· μένος δέ οἱ ἐν φρεσὶ θῆκε
> Ξάνθος, ἐπεὶ κεχόλωτο δαϊκταμένων αἰζηῶν,
> τοὺς Ἀχιλεὺς ἐδάϊζε κατὰ ῥόον οὐδ' ἐλέαιρεν.
>
> (XXI. 144-147)

It is only a repetition of the same events—Achilles' insult to the river in his boast over his fallen opponent (184-199) and his clogging of the stream, first with the corpse of Asteropaios (200-204) and then with those of his Paionian followers (205-210)—which finally moves Skamander to act. The battle between Achilles and Asteropaios is consequently bracketed by a repeated description of essentially identical events, the result of which is to rouse Skamander to attack Achilles. After the first provocation, however, Skamander sends a mortal substitute, the grandson of the river Axios, to encounter the fiery Achilles, but Achilles and his ash spear, the gift of his mortal parent, prove to be too much for the river's surrogate. When Skamander himself belatedly attacks in answer to Achilles' second provocation, moreover, it is not Achilles whom he ultimately encounters but the divine support represented by Achilles' armor, the gift of his immortal mother, for when the armor fails (265-272), Hephaistos, bound to Achilles both by the armor and by their shared attribute of fire,

replaces him with the pure essence of immortal fire, just as Skamander had replaced Asteropaios' mortal, and therefore imperfect, substitution for water with the immortal reality. Achilles' ash spear, at once his mortal inheritance and a symbol of the fire given men by the gods, unifies the two opposing aspects of his nature, mortal and immortal, in the single predominant attribute of destructive brilliance, of fire.

Achilles' boast over the corpse of Asteropaios, which contains his second challenge to Skamander, defines the basis of their conflict and the source of Achilles' fiery power, again in genealogical terms.

> "κεῖσ' οὕτως· χαλεπόν τοι ἐρισθενέος Κρονίωνος
> παισὶν ἐριζέμεναι ποταμοῖό περ ἐκγεγαῶτι.
> φῆσθα σὺ μὲν ποταμοῦ γένος ἔμμεναι εὐρὺ ῥέοντος,
> αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ γενεὴν μεγάλου Διὸς εὔχομαι εἶναι.
> τίκτε μ' ἀνὴρ πολλοῖσιν ἀνάσσων Μυρμιδόνεσσι,
> Πηλεὺς Αἰακίδης· ὁ δ' ἄρ' Αἰακὸς ἐκ Διὸς ἦεν.
> τῶ κρείσσων μὲν Ζεὺς ποταμῶν ἁλιμυρηέντων,
> κρείσσων αὖτε Διὸς γενεὴ ποταμοῖο τέτυκται.
> καὶ γὰρ σοὶ ποταμός γε πάρα μέγας, εἰ δύναταί τι
> χραισμεῖν· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστι Διὶ Κρονίωνι μάχεσθαι,
> τῷ οὐδὲ κρείων 'Αχελώϊος ἰσοφαρίζει,
> οὐδὲ βαθυρρείταο μέγα σθένος 'Ωκεανοῖο,
> ἐξ οὗ περ πάντες ποταμοὶ καὶ πᾶσα θάλασσα
> καὶ πᾶσαι κρῆναι καὶ φρείατα μακρὰ νάουσιν·
> ἀλλὰ καὶ ὃς δείδοικε Διὸς μεγάλοιο κεραυνὸν
> δεινήν τε βροντήν, ὅτ' ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν σμαραγήσῃ."
>
> (XXI. 184-199)

In this speech, Achilles claims his descent from Zeus for the first time, and it becomes immediately clear why, in the previous genealogical contests involving the ash spear—those between Sarpedon and Tlepolemos (V. 627 ff.) and between Aeneas and Achilles (XX. 156 ff.)—all three other combatants claim Zeus as an ancestor; the predominance of the themes in focal episodes tends to attract less important scenes into similar thematic patterns. Both branches of Achilles' genealogy are ultimately divine, and he traces the source of his fiery power, centered in the ash spear given him by Peleus, the grandson of Zeus, to Zeus' lightning and thunder. The earlier collocation of the Achaians' μείλινα δοῦρα with στεροπή is clarified by this interpretation of Achilles' paternal ancestry, and Asteropaios' very name continues the association between fire, lightning, and the ash spear in the

scene in which it appears with its greatest frequency in the whole of the *Iliad*, an association which also appears elsewhere in Greek literature.[76]

This indirect connection between the ash spear and fire on a thematic level is finally confirmed directly by a simile comparing the two in the climactic battle between Achilles and Hektor, the last appearance of the ash spear in the *Iliad*.

> Ὣς ὅρμαινε μένων, ὁ δέ οἱ σχεδὸν ἦλθεν Ἀχιλλεὺς
> ἶσος Ἐνυαλίῳ, κορυθάϊκι πτολεμιστῇ,
> σείων Πηλιάδα μελίην κατὰ δεξιὸν ὦμον
> δεινήν· ἀμφὶ δὲ χαλκὸς ἐλάμπετο εἴκελος αὐγῇ
> ἢ πυρὸς αἰθομένου ἢ ἠελίου ἀνιόντος.
> Ἕκτορα δ', ὡς ἐνόησεν, ἕλε τρόμος· οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔτ' ἔτλη
> αὖθι μένειν, ὀπίσω δὲ πύλας λίπε, βῆ δὲ φοβηθείς·
>
> (XXII. 131-137)

Ash spears appear three more times in this battle, and in each case, as here, they play a pivotal and decisive role in the outcome of the fight. χαλκός in this passage might be interpreted to mean the whole of Achilles' armor, but the context argues effectively in favor of applying it to the spearhead, and that Hektor should initially have been frightened into his flight around the city by Achilles' spear will prove to be very appropriate in the course of their battle.

The second appearance of the ash spear comes at the second turning point in the confrontation; just as the ash spear bran-

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[76] Ἀστεροπαῖος may occur as an epithet of Zeus in Cornutus (*de Natura Deorum*, 9), but some editors (e.g., Stoll) prefer to read Ἀστραπαῖος there (Pauly-Wissowa, IV (II), col. 1788; cf. Roscher, *Lexikon*, I. 658).

The ash spear appears once in Hesiod's *Shield of Herakles*; it is the weapon with which Herakles kills Kyknos.

> .... ἀπὸ δ' ἄμφω κέρσε τένοντε
> ἀνδροφόνος μελίη....
>
> (419-420)

Kyknos is also described as ἐϋμμελίης in the scene of his death (368), continuing the connection between the epithet and a violent death for its possessor which has already been observed with Priam and Euphorbos. To complete the association, Herakles, the owner of the fatal ash spear, is compared to Zeus' lightning at the beginning of the battle.

> .....ἐπὶ δ' ἱππείου θόρε δίφρου,
> εἴκελος ἀστεροπῇ πατρὸς Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο, ...
>
> (321-322)

I am grateful to Professor Gregory Nagy for having pointed this intriguing collocation out to me.

dished by Achilles first set Hektor to flight, when Athene has come to Achilles with her promise of help, he leans on his ash spear as he waits for her to stop Hektor's flight and to convince him to face Achilles.

> Ὣς φάτ' Ἀθηναίη, ὁ δ' ἐπείθετο, χαῖρε δὲ θυμῷ,
> στῆ δ' ἄρ' ἐπὶ μελίης χαλκογλώχινος ἐρεσθείς.
>
> (XXII. 224-225)

The adjective χαλκογλώχις, which is applied to the ash spear nowhere else in the *Iliad*, is a clear echo of the simile describing the spearhead at the beginning of the pursuit.

The theme of retrieval so frequently associated with ash spears in earlier episodes reaches the height of its importance in this battle, and its mortally decisive role here, as well as in the battles with Aeneas and Asteropaios, is clearly what conditioned its use in earlier scenes where the emphasis on recovery or extraction seemed irrelevant and enigmatic. Achilles is the first to throw his spear, and his first cast is unsuccessful.

> Ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἀμπεπαλὼν προΐει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος·
> καὶ τὸ μὲν ἄντα ἰδὼν ἠλεύατο φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ·
> ἕζετο γὰρ προϊδών, τὸ δ' ὑπέρπτατο χάλκεον ἔγχος,
> ἐν γαίῃ δ' ἐπάγη· ἀνὰ δ' ἥρπασε Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη,
> ἂψ δ' Ἀχιλῆϊ δίδου, λάθε δ' Ἕκτορα, ποιμένα λαῶν.
>
> (XXII. 273-277)

Athene's return of Achilles' spear is the only physical part the gods take in the fight, and it is a restatement in action of the earlier divine decision to abandon Hektor and support Achilles, for when Hektor throws his spear unsuccessfully, he gets no second chance.

> Ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἀμπεπαλὼν προΐει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος,
> καὶ βάλε Πηλεΐδαο μέσον σάκος οὐδ' ἀφάμαρτε·
> τῆλε δ' ἀπεπλάγχθη σάκεος δόρυ· χώσατο δ' Ἕκτωρ
> ὅττι ῥά οἱ βέλος ὠκὺ ἐτώσιον ἔκφυγε χειρός,
> στῆ δὲ κατηφήσας, οὐδ' ἄλλ' ἔχε μείλινον ἔγχος.
> Δηΐφοβον δὲ κάλει λευκάσπιδα μακρὸν ἀΰσας·
> ᾔτεέ μιν δόρυ μακρόν· ὁ δ' οὔ τί οἱ ἐγγύθεν ἦεν·
> Ἕκτωρ δ' ἔγνω ᾗσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ φώνησέν τε· . . . .
>
> (XXII. 289-296)

This is the moment of Hektor's ἀναγνώρισις, precipitated by his lack of a second ash spear and his implicit inability to recover the first; in the speech which follows he recognizes his impending death, his deception by Athene, and the absence of the accustomed

support of Zeus and Apollo (297-305). That the spear which Hektor lacks is specifically designated as one of ash further emphasizes the contrast between him and Achilles and recalls previous scenes in which an unsuccessful ash spear was the prelude to defeat and death.

Achilles' spear is again emphasized in a description of his armor as he, with the spear, and Hektor, armed with a sword, approach each other for their final confrontation.

> ὁρμήθη δ' Ἀχιλεύς, μένεος δ' ἐμπλήσατο θυμὸν
> ἀγρίου, πρόσθεν δὲ σάκος στέρνοιο κάλυψε
> καλὸν δαιδάλεον, κόρυθι δ' ἐπένευε φαεινῇ
> τετραφάλῳ· καλαὶ δὲ περισσείοντο ἔθειραι
> χρύσεαι, ἃς Ἥφαιστος ἵει λόφον ἀμφὶ θαμειάς.
> οἷος δ' ἀστὴρ εἶσι μετ' ἀστράσι νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ
> ἕσπερος, ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν οὐρανῷ ἵσταται ἀστήρ,
> ὣς αἰχμῆς ἀπέλαμπ' εὐήκεος, ἣν ἄρ' Ἀχιλλεὺς
> πάλλεν δεξιτερῇ φρονέων κακὸν Ἕκτορι δίῳ,
> εἰσορόων χρόα καλόν, ὅπῃ εἴξειε μάλιστα.
>
> (XXII. 312-321)

The simile here again echoes the one with which the battle began and conclusively confirms the interpretation of χαλκός there as a reference to the spearhead and not to the whole of Achilles' armor.

The climax of the battle follows immediately, and the reason for the repeated emphasis on Achilles' ash spear quickly becomes apparent; it is the weapon of Hektor's death.

> τῇ ῥ' ἐπὶ οἷ μεμαῶτ' ἔλασ' ἔγχεϊ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς,
> ἀντικρὺ δ' ἁπαλοῖο δι' αὐχένος ἤλυθ' ἀκωκή.
> οὐδ' ἄρ' ἀπ' ἀσφάραγον μελίη τάμε χαλκοβάρεια,
> ὄφρα τί μιν προτιείποι ἀμειβόμενος ἐπέεσσιν.
> ἤριπε δ' ἐν κονίῃς· ὁ δ' ἐπεύξατο δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς·
>
> (XXII. 326-330)

In this passage the text really speaks for itself and requires little comment, although it is pertinent to note that even in this emotionally climactic scene Achilles does not neglect to retrieve his spear from Hektor's corpse.

> Ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἐκ νεκροῖο ἐρύσσατο χάλκεον ἔγχος,
> καὶ τό γ' ἄνευθεν ἔθηχ', ὁ δ' ἀπ' ὤμων τεύχε' ἐσύλα
> αἱματόεντ'· . . . . .
>
> (XXII. 367-369)

Achilles' ash spear has its most important role in the *Iliad*'s most important episode; the fatal power of Achilles' spear, when it is

specifically designated an ash spear, is reserved for Hektor, for not only is it nowhere else lethal, but the ash spear also fails to strike either of the other two opponents, Aeneas and Asteropaios, against whom it is used.

After these three progressively more important battles, in which both Achilles' paternal ash spear and his immortal armor are prominent features, none of the words associated with ash spears occurs again. This is not particularly surprising, since there are no further battle scenes after the death of Hektor, although other words for "spear" are reasonably common in the last two books of the *Iliad*, particularly in the games of the twenty-third book: δόρυ (XXIII. 893; 896); δουρί (XXIII. 637); δουρός (XXIII. 529; 821); ἔγχος (XXIII. 798; 884). But any further reference to the ash spear after Achilles has killed Hektor with it would obviously be anticlimactic and would contradict the carefully constructed pattern of thematic restriction with which the ash spear is used throughout the *Iliad*.

The themes with which the ash spear is associated in the scenes after the arming of Patroklos are comparatively simple and straightforward in their general outlines, even though their implications are broad and complex, and their prominence in those scenes is indicated by the restriction of the word μελίη exclusively to Achilles' ash spear and the limitation of that weapon to carefully chosen focal battles. The use of the ash spear in this portion of the *Iliad* is also consistent with the major roles which ash trees and ash nymphs have in Greek mythology, for the ash spear's major thematic connotations are mortality and destruction, mortal ancestry in Achilles' father, and, through Achilles' paternal line to Zeus, the destructive brilliance of fire and lightning. The importance of the ash spear to Achilles and to the meaning of these battles, particularly the final battle with Hektor, demands his continued possession of the weapon throughout his participation in the fighting, and there is consequently consistent attention to his recovery of the spear whenever he uses it. The decisive significance of the ash spear and the themes associated with it in the most important and climactic episodes of the epic also tends to superimpose the ash spear, in its adjectival forms, on earlier scenes with similar narrative patterns or to create such patterns in the situations in which an ash spear appears. The favored patterns for this sort of transfer appear to be those of ancestry

ultimately derived from Zeus and of the extraction or recovery of the spear. The persistence of these thematic restrictions even in scenes to which the restrictions are not essential indicates that the importance of the principal element was pervasive enough to govern the compositional use throughout the whole of the epic of all semantically associated elements in accordance with those major themes.

This restriction of a particular compositional element to specific thematic and narrative situations is not dependent on the semantic or metrical characteristics of the words involved; indeed, it is instead accompanied by a reciprocal metrical freedom in the use of the word μελίη. Although the expressions μείλινον ἔγχος and μείλινα δοῦρα, ending with the line, and δόρυ μείλινον, from the penthemimeral caesura to the bucolic diaeresis, are completely regular in their metrical localization, μελίη appears with a large number of adjectives in a wide range of positions in the line. The difference is at least partially predictable from the syntactic nature of the two words; the adjective tends to be juxtaposed to the noun which it modifies and thus to become part of a larger expression which is more apt to strict localization, whereas the noun can stand alone. But even the larger, apparently formulaic expression Πηλιάδα μελίην is not localized at a single position, indicating that the adaptation of the word to the narrative themes of the epic has superceded metrical and formulaic considerations in its placement in the line.[77]

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[77] Because of its basic metrical shape, μελίη (-α) is not, and in the hexameter cannot be, modified prosodically by a following word; the only possible modifications would be the correption of its final long syllable in the cases in which it is open (nom. and dat. sing. and nom. pl.), an option which is clearly impossible in the hexameter since it would produce a sequence of three short syllables. There is only one case where the inflection affects the metrical conformation of the word, the dative plural in -ησι (ν), giving the shape ⏑ ⏑ – ⏓, which, in its single occurrence in the *Iliad* (II. 543), falls in one of the two preferred positions for words of that shape. (E. G. O'Neill, Jr., "The localization of metrical word-types in the Greek hexameter", *YCS* VIII (1942), Table XIII, p. 143, and Table XXIX, p. 151; O'Neill's figures in Table XIII must be supplemented and recomputed with the aid of Table XXIX, which gives the natural quantities of line-final syllables, all of which O'Neill counts as long in his regular tables.) Predictably for a short word, the other cases of μελίη (nom., acc., and gen. sing.) which occur in the *Iliad* are not restricted to any particular position in the line, but they do follow the same pattern as other words of that shape throughout the *Iliad* (Five occurrences ending at the penthemimeral, and four at the hephthemimeral, caesuras; and two and one occurrences ending respectively at O'Neill's positions 9 and 11. See

The case of μελίη and the two adjectives related to it is obviously extraordinary, since ash spears are prominent in the most important battles in the *Iliad* and are implicated with the principal themes which surround and help define the figure of Achilles. The use of μελίη, μείλινος, and ἐϋμμελίης offers an example of the extent to which an oral poet, using his inherited tradition proficiently, was able to perceive, organize, and regulate narrative details in order to achieve a desired thematic effect, even in an epic of the size and scope of the *Iliad*. That even the single exception to the otherwise exclusive application of μελίη to Achilles' ash spear, the ash spears of the Abantes, offers a straightforward rationalization for the exception in the eponymous hero Abas, a clear epichoric parallel to Achilles and his shield, is perhaps the extreme of complete, comprehensive control of the poet's material. This combination of narrative and thematic restriction with metrical and syntactic adaptability suggests a striking uniformity and sophistication of compositional technique, not only fully developed in metrical and formulaic terms, but also possessing a thematic consistency capable of manipulating even the smallest elements of diction to conform with the overriding themes and meaning of the epic as a whole, referring not to their compositional convenience, as is so often assumed of oral poetry, but rather to their mythological connotations and their thematic significance at decisive points in the narrative.

O'Neill, *op. cit.*, Table VII, p. 141). More surprisingly, the expression Πηλιάδα μελίην is not fixed in position; it occurs three times in line-initial position extending to the penthemimeral caesura (XVI. 143= XIX. 390, and XXI. 162), but it also appears once stretching from the end of the first foot to the hephthemimeral caesura.

σείων Πηλιάδα μελίην κατὰ δεξιὸν ὦμον....

(XXII. 133)

This is a somewhat unusual adaptation of the formula, and the same phrase in the nominative singular is divided in order to adapt it to its new shape and syntactic function.

Πηλιὰς ἤϊξεν μελίη, λάκε δ' ἀσπὶς ὑπ' αὐτῆς.

(XX. 277)

Such adaptations of traditional materials have recently been interpreted as Homeric innovations (A. Hoekstra, *Homeric Modifications of Formulaic Prototypes*, Amsterdam, 1964 (1969), *passim*; Hoekstra's analysis is arranged according to the linguistic changes that motivated formulaic adaptations rather than by the adaptations themselves, and he does not treat this expression.); be that as it may, the pattern of use of μελίη, especially in its adjectivally modified form Πηλιάδα μελίην, suggests that it was adapted to the demands of the narrative rather than those of meter.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION: HOMERIC COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES

In the preceding section on Achilles' ash spear, I have attempted to demonstrate the ways in which a single noun in the *Iliad* is selectively regulated by factors in addition to the usual restrictions of meter, syntax, and semantic denotation; beyond what I have called the thematic regulation of μελίη, there is also a concentric restriction of etymologically related compositional elements around the central figure of Achilles and the specific themes associated with his ash spear. There is one objection which can be raised against my basic hypothesis, and that is that all spear-shafts were made of ash wood. On the assumption that that is true, this argument would logically continue, the designation of a specific spear as an ash spear would not distinguish it from those left undesignated—would indeed simply state, rather redundantly, what was naturally assumed about all spears, with no more effect on the "essential idea" of "spear" than, for example, the likewise redundant modifying idea of χάλκεος.[1] The change in diction from δόρυ or ἔγχος to μελίη (μελίην), δόρυ μείλινον, or μείλινον ἔγχος—all conveying the essential idea of "spear" in either the nominative or the accusative case—would therefore merely represent the adaptation of a set of semantically and syntactically identical compositional elements to different metrical contexts, and the restriction of certain etymologically related compositional elements to certain thematically related contexts and figures would be a simple matter of metrical coincidence.

This objection is not an easy one to answer; although there are indications that Mycenaean spear-shafts were at least sometimes made of olive-wood,[2] archaeological evidence simply does not exist for either side of the case.

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[1] I am particularly indebted to Professor C. H. Whitman for having first outlined this potential objection for me and for having indicated the ways in which it would have to be handled. Any flaws in the articulation of my response are, of course, my own.

[2] A. M. Snodgrass, *Arms and Armour of the Greeks*, London, 1967, p. 23.

> It goes without saying that virtually all the surviving armour and weapons of ancient times are made of metal or other durable materials. But we should remember that, at many periods, perishable materials like wood and leather were also widely used, so that this limitation on our evidence could easily lead to a distorted picture.[3]

In the absence of archaeological proof, the argument must proceed on the assumption, which can be neither proved nor refuted, that all spear-shafts were made of ash-wood, and that the objection based on that assumption is therefore valid.

The answer to the objection must consequently be sought in the context of the diction of the *Iliad.* The longer expressions Πηλιάς . . . . μελίη/Πηλιάδα μελίην (XX. 277/XVI. 143; XIX. 390; XXI. 162; XXII. 133) can safely be set aside at the outset; the ash spear from Mt. Pelion belongs only to Achilles, as the poet states twice (XVI. 140-144 and XIX. 387-391), and the restriction of μελίη when it is modified by Πηλιάς needs no explanation—there may be metrical reasons, but the noun is undeniably semantically restricted in the first place by the meaning of the very specific adjective. With the other occurrences of μελίη, the first question to be considered is whether the exclusive restriction of μελίη, when it means "ash spear", to Achilles is simply a result of compositional coincidence, motivated entirely by differences in the metrical and formulaic context. In that case, μελίη/μελίην would simply be a metrically convenient variant of δόρυ and ἔγχος, and all three words would supply the basic meaning "spear" in different contexts. This argument seems immediately unlikely, for it implies that there is something metrically so unusual about the name 'Αχιλλεύς/'Αχιλεύς, or about the epithet-systems associated with it, that its presence created a metrical context which required a word for "spear" entirely different from the words for "spear" used with all the other characters in the *Iliad.* The most superficial analysis will reveal that there is nothing about the metrical characteristics of 'Αχιλλεύς/'Αχιλεύς which would necessitate so dramatic a break with the diction of the rest of the *Iliad*;

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 13; cf. A. M. Snodgrass, *Early Greek Armour and Weapons*, Edinburgh, 1964, chapter 5, "The Spear", pp. 114-139, where Snodgrass confines his descriptions entirely to spear-heads and spear-butts; the only archaeologically documentable characteristic of spear-shafts is their length. See also Friedrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-97, and my argument on the ancient distribution of the various types of ash tree.

the obvious and exact metrical analogue is easily found, for example, in the name Ὀδυσσεύς/Ὀδυσεύς and its associated epithet-system—e.g., πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς = πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς. But a quick glance at a concordance will reveal that epithet-systems would affect the interchange with the metrically equivalent names of other heroes only in enjambement; Achilles' name occurs in the same line as the word μελίη only twice, and in both cases it is without epithet (Ἀχιλεύς, XXI. 169; Ἀχιλῆος, XXI. 174). The single exception, when Achilles' name with an epithet appears in the same line as μελίην, is a case of enjambement expanding and depending on the syntax of the preceding line, and Achilles' name and the word μελίην are syntactically unconnected.

> αὐτίκα τῷ μὲν ἔπειτα κατ' ὀφθαλμῶν χέεν ἀχλύν,
> Πηλεΐδῃ Ἀχιλῆϊ· ὁ δὲ μελίην εὔχαλκον
> ἀσπίδος ἐξέρυσεν μεγαλήτορος Αἰνείαο·
>
> (*Iliad* XX. 321-323)

Here again, to use the same example, Odysseus' name-epithet system furnishes an exact metrical parallel at the same position in the line, ἀντιθέῳ Ὀδυσῆϊ (*Odyssey* I. 21; VI. 331; XXII. 291); the difference between initial consonant and initial vowel in the epithets is metrically inoperative here, since all the examples are line-initial expressions. The extremely flexible syntactic and semantic character of the line containing μελίην in this passage—dative epithet-name combination of the shape -⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑ (related syntactically only to the structure of the preceding line) plus ὁ δὲ μελίην εὔχαλκον—suggests its potential usefulness in battle-field contexts. Since it contains no verb, only an accusative noun-epithet expression with the denotative meaning of "spear" and a masculine nominative singular pronoun which could potentially refer either to the dative singular proper noun at the beginning of the line or to someone else (as is the case here), the possibilities for its use are virtually unlimited. Yet neither the line, nor the accusative noun-epithet expression (⏑ ⏑ - ⏕ - ⏓), nor the noun alone in any grammatical case, is used outside the immediate context of Achilles in the *Iliad* (with the exception of two cases when it means "ash tree" and the lone plural with the Abantes, all noted in Part III). If this be coincidental, then it is an extraordinary coincidence indeed, for, as I have shown, there is no reason—metrical, syntactic, or denotatively semantic—that a

common noun meaning "spear" with a straightforward anapaestic metrical shape should be exclusively restricted to use in the context of a single character and the themes associated with him. We must therefore look outside the areas of meter, syntax, and denotative meaning for an explanation of the restriction of the word μελίη to Achilles and even to certain scenes with particular climactic and thematic importance; connotation is the logical place to seek that explanation, and in Part III I have attempted to demonstrate some of the connotative factors involved in the specialized use of the word μελίη.

But if those who may object that all spears were made of ash-wood insist that, since there is no metrically equivalent noun meaning "spear" in the diction of the *Iliad*, the use of μελίη is restricted to the context of Achilles for metrical or formulaic reasons, they are placed in the extremely tenuous position of having to contend that a great deal, if not all, of the diction surrounding Achilles is so different from the formulaic diction employed in the rest of the *Iliad* that at least one word—μελίη—had to be introduced into the traditional vocabulary at some point in its development in order to express the essential idea of "spear" in the anomalous compositional contexts surrounding Achilles. This position would also, of course, require that the diction associated with Achilles was so anomalous that it was metrically impossible to adapt it—and the word μελίη, which was a part of it—to any other figure in the *Iliad*, including a figure, like Odysseus, whose name is the metrical equivalent, in all respects, of Achilles' name. This argument is obviously quite acceptable to my hypothesis; indeed, it demands a considerably larger body of specialized and restricted elements of diction surrounding Achilles in the *Iliad* than I have attempted to demonstrate here. If this should prove to be true—and it is obviously an area of research which I hope to pursue in the future—the conclusions reached here about thematic and connotative restriction and specialization of compositional elements within the diction of the oral tradition would have to be extended rather than abandoned. Such conjecture is, however, unproductive without the research and analysis which will be necessary to substantiate or refute it; for the present, it has served as a means of logical extension of the argument for confirming the thematic motivation for the restriction of the noun μελίη, whether that

restriction is part of a larger system of specialized diction or is the isolated specialization of a single compositional element.

That the use of the word μελίη is extraordinarily restricted and specialized in the *Iliad* is by this point in my argument, I hope, no longer in question; it remains for me to demonstrate that the etymologically related adjectives μείλινος and ἐϋμμελίης, though more extended in their use, are still concentrically oriented around the specialized themes associated with Achilles' ash spear, and that the thematic association cannot be explained by other factors, either metrical and formulaic or practical, such as the objection that all spears were made of ash-wood. Unfortunately, the very nature of ἐϋμμελίης as a specialized epithet makes such a demonstration impossible for it. Although one can adduce clear narrative connections between the two figures, Euphorbos and Priam, who are described with the epithet, and between them and Achilles, and although it can be pointed out that ἐϋμμελίης is used exclusively in scenes which describe the deaths of Euphorbos and Priam, recalling the association between the ash-spear and mortality, and that outside the context of death-scenes Priam has a metrically and syntactically equivalent but semantically different epithet at the same position in the line, there is no way to demonstrate with a specialized epithet, as I did with the noun μελίη, either that it could have been used elsewhere and wasn't or that it was part of a larger system of specialized diction. To attempt such a demonstration would involve re-examining some of our most basic assumptions about the form and function of name-epithet systems, an undertaking which is beyond the scope of the present inquiry and which might well prove unfruitful.

Even if we are forced to abandon ἐϋμμελίης on this point, the other adjective etymologically and semantically related to μελίη, μείλινος, offers a simple and straightforward response to the objection that its use in episodes with particular narrative or thematic associations is the result of metrically or formulaically motivated coincidence, for in the *Iliad* μείλινος has a metrical and syntactic analogue in χάλκεος, which is used in the same cases with the same nouns at the same position in the line as is μείλινος. δόρυ μείλινον always occurs between the penthemimeral caesura and the bucolic diaeresis in the *Iliad* (V. 666, 694; XVI. 114, 814; XXI. 178), and it is parallelled by δόρυ χάλκεον, which twice stretches from the hephthemimeral caesura to the end of

the fifth foot (XIII. 247; XVI. 608) but is found three times in the same position in the line as δόρυ μείλινον, from the penthemimeral caesura to the diaeresis (XVI. 346, 862; XXIII. 896). Similarly, in the *Iliad* the expression μείλινον ἔγχος always extends from the bucolic diaeresis to the end of the line (V. 655; VI. 65; XIII. 597; XX. 272; XXI. 172; XXII. 293), and the metrically and syntactically equivalent formula χάλκεον ἔγχος also invariably fills the Adonic segment (III. 317; IV. 481; V. 620; XIII. 184 = XIII. 404 = XIII. 503 = XVI. 610 = XVII. 305 = XVII. 526; XIII. 296, 408, 595; XVI. 318; XX. 163; XXI. 200; XXII. 275, 367). Even the two neuter nominative-accusative plural occurrences of μείλινα δοῦρα (XIII. 715; XIX. 361) are parallelled by δούρατα μακρά (V. 656)—all following the bucolic diaeresis.

These available parallels in diction clearly refute the objections, based on the assumption that all spears were made of ash-wood, that μείλινος did not affect the essential idea of "spear", and that the concentration of the expressions μείλινον ἔγχος and δόρυ μείλινον in identifiable narrative and thematic contexts is the result of coincidence, caused by metrical rather than semantic or thematic considerations. As in the case of μελίη, it would have to have been an extraordinary coincidence, since, as I have shown above in Part III, the adjective μείλινος is reserved exclusively for the weapons of Achilles, Patroklos, and their opponents after Patroklos' entry into the battle in Book XVI (with the exception of the ambiguous plural μείλινα at XIX. 361, as noted above). Even outside the context of the participation of Achilles and Patroklos in the battle, the appearance of μείλινος invariably occurs in episodes with themes similar to those found in the scenes where Achilles' μελίη appears—again with the possible exception of the other neuter plural μείλινα, XIII. 715. To restate my previous conclusions, those principal themes are first, the extraction or recovery of the spear; second, fire; and finally, contests of genealogy and particularly of genealogy ultimately derived from Zeus. This thematic restriction of an element of diction is in itself unusual but might be coincidental; the parallel with the themes associated with Achilles' μελίη is a more unusual example of a connotative connection between etymologically related words, and both the thematic restriction and the related connotative association are quite surprising when one considers that there is an available metrically and syntactically equivalent

formula in both cases for expressing the essential idea of "spear". There is a clear semantic distinction between δόρυ μείλινον and δόρυ χάλκεον and likewise between μείλινον ἔγχος and χάλκεον ἔγχος in the diction of the *Iliad*; in linguistic terms, the two expressions containing χάλκεον appear to be connotatively unmarked, or generalized, whereas the two with μείλινον are marked, or semantically specialized, in terms of their connotative relationship to their contexts. In this case we can assert with some confidence what could not be asserted for the metrically and syntactically equivalent epithets of Priam (ἐϋμμελίω and ἀγακλῆος Πριάμοιο, genitive)—that the nouns ἔγχος and δόρυ in these formulae do *not* bear the full weight of the semantic expression of the essential idea, and that instead the epithets are the dominant factors in differentiating the meanings and uses of the four formulae.[4] To deny this would be to involve oneself in the complex question of a larger system of specialized diction outlined in the case of μελίη.

To restate my conclusions from Part III, the noun μελίη is restricted in the *Iliad* to describing the individual weapon of a specific character in particular contexts; in a similar but broader way, the adjective μείλινος is restricted concentrically around the same character and the same themes. I would contend that ἐϋμμελίης is similarly regulated, but the fact that it is a specialized personal epithet makes a conclusive demonstration of its restriction much more difficult. In at least the first two cases, the motivating factors which regulate this restriction are not confined to the metrical, syntactic, or even the denotatively semantic characteristics of the words or the expressions to which they belong; their selective use is also regulated by what I have called connotative, thematic, or conceptual factors. Connotation, a specialized system of associations related to an expression's context, has to be considered as a potential semantic aspect of the essential idea of any compositional element. That such con-

[4] I am aware of only one place where Parry argues against this sort of connotative and contextual interpretation of epithets when used with common nouns, and that is his impressive refutation of Calhoun's interpretation of the emotional connotations of ἔπεα πτερόεντα ("The art of formula in Homer—ἔπεα πτερόεντα", *Classical Philology* XXX (1935), pp. 215-227). The argument of Parry's response ("About winged words", *Classical Philology* XXXII (1937), pp. 59-63, reprinted *MHV*, *op. cit.*, pp. 414-418) is unfortunately inapplicable here, since it is based on very real formulaic and stylistic considerations which are not present, so far as I can determine, in the four formulae under consideration here.

notation is only a potential which remains latent unless elicited by the context has been demonstrated at length by Nagler,[5] and the contextually unregulated use of μελίη and μείλινος in the *Odyssey* (see Part. III, especially note 9) shows that the consistency of their use in the *Iliad* is not generalized but is a latent system of associative meaning activated by and specifically adapted to the particular context.

The emphasis which can be placed on an individual figure, or on certain facets of a figure's character, by specialized elaborations and variations of patterned episodes is obvious; in the *Iliad*, this sort of emphatic specialization is naturally most evident around the central figure of Achilles, as I have attempted to show with short analyses of the *Hoplopoiia* and the arming of Achilles. The most important figure in the epic is distinguished by his special arms, and his individualized weaponry is defined by means of specialized methods of description and techniques of composition. My purpose has been to demonstrate that this capacity for narratively and thematically oriented specialization of compositional technique extends beyond the patterned episode to the most basic elements of the oral poet's diction.

The parallel between these two levels of compositional specialization is best illustrated by analogy to the flexibility of the verse structure, which I sketched in Part I; just as in the structure of the hexameter there is a fundamental normative pattern in the tetracolonic articulation of the line, there is also an underlying system of normative diction in the poet's tradition, but, like the normative structure of the verse, it is neither exclusive nor absolute. In both cases, the basic, unmarked normative structure is not restrictive but is flexible, and it provides a regularly predictable and compositionally dependable framework which not only has the potential flexibility to accommodate specialized variations and elaborations, but which also has the innate capacity to emphasize and distinguish unusual variations by supplying a metrically, formulaically, and connotatively regularized and neutral background, against which specialized adaptations on any level of composition are emphatically eminent. On a denotative, narrative level, in adaptations of characterization or elaborations of patterned episodes, for example, the compositional facility and aesthetic

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[5] Nagler, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

effect of such specialized variations are obvious; it is the analogous adaptations on a smaller scale—specialized uses of the innate flexibility in the structures of meter and diction—and on a larger scale—the selective use of connotatively differentiated elements to create thematically regulated patterns throughout the epic as a whole—which now demand our attention.

We can now feel relatively secure in our understanding of the normative background of metrical, formulaic, and episodic structure which is the foundation of oral compositional technique, and it is now necessary to analyze the compositional methods involved in adapting an individual element of diction to a specific context and to define the interrelationships between the individual elements, their immediate metrical, formulaic, and narrative contexts, and the thematic and aesthetic structure of the epic in which they appear. At its most macrocosmic, the idea of variation against a normative background in the *Iliad* encompasses the full breadth of the war as a regularized and predictable set of circumstances within which the unexpected anomalies of extraordinary figures and events take on added significance;[6] at its most microcosmic, it attempts to offer a means of analyzing metrical and formulaic anomalies as characteristic features of the innate flexibility of normative structures, rather than as departures from or violations of the rules of a rigidly fixed system of restrictions.

The origin of the hexameter is of central importance to this hypothesis, for the flexibility of meter and diction which I have outlined for the oral tradition requires that they evolved together and from the same linguistic origins and impulses; if the structure of the meter were an artificial, external imposition on the poet's diction, rather than a regularization of the natural cadences of his language, the high degree of selective flexibility which I have attributed to the tradition of the *Iliad* would be much less likely to be attained in an oral adaptation of language to meter. Similarly, the highly evolved and highly selective tradition demands an equally selective poet to exploit its potentials to their limits. To extend the analogy to language further, poetry in general and the

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[6] Professor John Finley first suggested the contrast between individual variation and universal continuity to me in the even broader context of the foundations of Greek mythological thought, and many of my specific arguments here are reapplications of his ideas in the more general areas of philosophy and aesthetics.

Greek oral tradition in particular originate and evolve as specialized modes of expression; the limitations inherent in their specialization are only compensated by the increased depth and precision of expression which they are able to add to the particular areas of human experience to which they are adapted. The basic aesthetic impulse toward the communication of a more sophisticated and more comprehensive synthesis of human thought and experience on all levels lies behind the generation and development not only of language but also of specialized poetic diction and of myth. I have attempted here to show the ways in which the three are related in origin, in development, and finally in the traditional compositional technique of the poet of the *Iliad*.

On the basis of the metrically, formulaically, and thematically flexible capacity for subtle and complex modes of expression which I believe I have perceived in the Homeric compositional technique, I would at this point be unwilling to reject the analogy to the methods of written poetry as one possible critical approach to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* simply on the basis of a difference in the circumstances and methods of composition. The fundamental aesthetic impulse behind oral and written poetic composition is constant, and the circumstantially conditioned differences are differences of degree, not of kind. The application of such an analogy to written poetry in the criticism of the Homeric epics must of course be cautious, but we must be equally cautious not to overextend the other critical analogy most frequently used as a basis for the critical analysis of the epics, the analogy to the oral poetries of other languages and other cultures. Both are analogies and both are useful as critical tools only as long as their limitations are recognized; to attempt to establish exact parallels between two bodies of poetry produced under different circumstances is potentially dangerous and counterproductive, whether the differences in circumstances were compositional or cultural and linguistic. But on the positive side, both analogies have characteristics which confirm their validity when they are applied circumspectly; other oral literatures were produced under compositional conditions basically similar to those in which we believe the Homeric epics were produced, while later Greek written poetry was produced under linguistic and cultural conditions more closely related to the tradition in which we believe that Homer worked. We are in both cases dependent on imperfect parallels, and it

will be necessary to return to the texts of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in order to reevaluate the validity of our basic assumptions and critical methods, and in order to extend our present understanding of the fundamentals of Homeric compositional technique and its function as a means of poetic expression.

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